DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 273 102 FL 015 917

AUTHOR	Willems, Gerard M., Ed.; Riley, Philip, Ed.
TITLE	Communicative Foreign Language Teaching and the Training of Foreign Language Teachers.
INSTITUTION	Interstudie Inst. for Teacher Education, Nijmegen (Netherlands).
REPORT NO	ISBN-90-71032-01-9
PUB DATE	84
NOTE	219p.; For individual chapters, see FL 015 918-928.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
LANGUAGE	English; French
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Techniques; *Communicative Competence (Languages); Cultural Influences; Instructional Materials; *Language Teachers; Second Language Learning; Social Influences; Student Centered Curriculum; *Teacher Education; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

A collection of papers concerning the communicative approach to second language instruction and the language teacher's training includes: (1) "Relationships between the Teacher, the Learner and Methods in Foreign Language Teaching: Some Basic Considerations," by F. Martin-Molero; (2) "Les Cloisons Etanches entre les Didactiques (The Tight Partitioning of Methods)," by Jan P. Menting; (3) "Your Slip is Showing: Communicative Interference in Second Language Learning," by Philip Riley; (4) "The Communicative Approach to Foreign Language Teaching: The Teacher's Case," by Dora Dolle and Gerard M. Willems; (5) "Mixed-Ability Foreign Language Teaching and the Communicative Approach: The Pupil's Case," by Gerard M. Willems; (6) "Comprehension de Textes et Actes de Parole (Understanding a Text and Speech Acts)," by Jan P. Menting; (7) "The Socio-Cultural Dimension of Integrated Language Studies," by David Whybra; (8) "Using Your Textbook Communicatively," by Wendy Scott and Ninian Millar; (9) "Primary English and a Communicative Approach," by Wout de Jong; (10) "Video Sequences and Creativity in Communicative Language Teaching," by David Whybra and Jerg Prinzing; (11) "Student-Centred Testing: Assessing Communication in Progress," by Andrew Harrison; and (12) "The Communicative Approach. An Introductory Bibliography," by Philip Riley. (MSE)

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Communicative Foreign Language Teaching and the Training of Foreign Language Teachers

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ED273102

FL 015 917

Interstudie Institute for Teacher Education

Interstudie 1984.

Typing: Janine Arts.
Press: Kees Kremer.
Lay-out and cover: Cor van Dijk.

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CIP-GEGEVENS KONINKLUKE BIBLIOTHEEK, DEN HAAG

Communicative

Communicative foreign language teaching and the training of foreign language teachers / (ed. by Gerard M. Willems & Philip Riley ; by Dora Dolle ... et al.).-
Nijmegen: Interstudie Institute for Teacher Education.-
III.
Met lit. opg.
ISBN 90-71032-01-9
SISO 456.2 UDC 37.02:800.83
Trefw.: vreemde talen onderwijs.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jan Menting's first contribution to this collection: "*Les Cloisons Etanches entre les Didactiques*" is a modified version of his article:"*Quel 'Programme Commun' de Formation? Pour une Didactique Commune*" which appeared in Le Français dans le Monde, N° 177, May/June 1983.

Gerard M. Willems' contribution: "*Mixed-Ability Foreign Language Teaching and the Communicative Approach. The Pupil's Case.*" is a re-write of an article in Dutch entitled: "*Gedifferentieerd Onderwijs in de Vreemde Talen en Enige gedachten over de Gevolgen voor het Beoordelen van Taalvaardigheid*" which is to be found in Levende Talen, N° 367, December 1981.

Andrew Harrison's article in this collection first appeared in Levende Talen, N° 372, May 1982, and is here reprinted with kind permission of the author.

The bibliography at the end of this book is a condensed and adapted version of the one Philip Riley wrote in collaboration with the A.T.E.E. Standing Working Group for the Training of Language Teachers and which was first published in Mélanges Pédagogiques (1982) of the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (C.R.A.P.E.L.) of the University of Nancy II.

"The contrast between language as it is experienced in the classroom and language as it is known to be used in society often makes it difficult for the learner to appreciate the value of what he is learning", David Wilkins, (1976), Notional Syllabuses, p. 13.

"The whole of the movement toward a functional or communicative approach which we have been witnessing for the past seven years or so, is a reaction against the inadequacy of purely linguistic descriptions", Philip Riley, (1980), "Viewing Comprehension, l'oeil écoute", C.R.A.P.E.L., Mélanges Pédagogiques.

"If,....., we select a grammatical structure as a learning item, and demonstrate it in an audio-visualised context within which it has no authentic communicative status as a plausible utterance, then we confuse form with function", Christopher Candlin, (1981), The Communicative Teaching of English, p. 24.

"In much of L2 teaching today cultural knowledge tends to be equated with classical literature and,....., much has yet to be achieved to really impart the cultural dimension of a non-native language", Leo Loveday, (1982), The Sociolinguistics of Learning and Using a Non-Native Language, p. 35.

EDITORS' PREFACE

The discontent with the structuralist and Chomskyan view of linguistic study which found its most powerful expression in Dell Hymes' "On Communicative Competence" has given rise to an ever-increasing spate of books, articles and syllabuses about or based on "the communicative approach". Without claiming that the communicative approach has actually reached the "coal-face" of the classroom, we can safely state that its sudden and widespread popularity in applied linguistic circles is due to the general discontent with traditional, structure-based audio-lingual/audio-visual and situational language teaching. Obviously the failure of behaviouristic approaches has prepared the teaching profession for a wider conception of its objective i.e. developing communicative and not just linguistic competence in language learners. The emphasis in language teaching is, slowly but surely, shifting from structures (formal aspects) to notions and functions (functional aspects).

For a number of reasons, however, this shift, though vital, is insufficient. "Going functional" will not solve the foreign language teacher's every problem. There are a number of other fundamental issues to be taken into account.

To begin with, the organisation of syllabuses on communicative principles, certainly for teaching absolute beginners, is no sinecure. Most notional-functional syllabuses that have appeared are atomistic and do not take the grammatical system of the language into account. Moreover, the foreign language teacher simply cannot confine himself to knowing about and teaching the functions of 'his' language. He will have to acquaint himself with what Candlin calls the "positioning" of functions in discourse. Communication, certainly in an L2, is an extremely complex and multi-faceted phenomenon and it is important for the teacher to know about how meaning in it is negotiated. Language teaching which deals with notions and propositions but neglects speech-acts and the organisation of discourse cannot really be called "communicative" since it cannot clarify how we go from what is said to what is meant.

Secondly, the communicative approach ushers in a long-forgotten protagonist in language teaching: the learner. The strategies that he uses in learning and using the language will form the centre of communicative research in the years to come and will be fundamental to the foreign language teacher's professional training. Also the results of contrastive work at discourse level to establish cross-cultural differences in communicative behaviour will be grist to the teacher's mill. Placing the learner in the centre, which, in fact, is a conditio sine qua non for real communicative language teaching further implies that the teacher accepts a shift of role from "authority" to "guide".

Lastly, the teacher who "goes notional-functional" will need to realise that notional-functional type materials and syllabuses restrict themselves almost exclusively to the verbal aspects of communication. "Body-language" consisting of posture, gestures and facial expression, in short the whole paralinguistic and non-verbal repertoire in communication is largely missed out. So is the indispensable role of supra-segmental

features like rhythm, intonation and key. In these fields, too, the teacher will need to acquaint himself with some fundamental issues if he wants to be really communicative in his teaching.

It is clear that the professional, technical and linguistic demands that the communicative approach makes on the teacher are heavy. The vast number of publications in branches of science like Pragmatics, Speech Act theory, Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics and Language Didactics that deal with the issues enumerated above, form a daunting and bewildering jungle to the teacher trainer and teacher alike. Without claiming to be representative of all the scientific fields of research mentioned above, the present collection of theoretical and practical articles attempts to make this jungle a bit less impenetrable. Hopefully, it offers the reader an insight into what is to be understood by the communicative approach and how its concepts reflect on the teacher's professional qualities and his work in the classroom.

The majority of the contributions to this reader appear here for the first time and were specially written for it by members of the Standing Working Group (SWG) on the training of foreign language teachers of the Association of Teacher Education in Europe (A.T.E.E.). The members are all, in some way or another, involved in teacher (re)training. Only two contributions (viz. Andrew Harrison's on communicative testing and Wout de Jong's on communicative teaching to young beginners) come from outside the SWG. The former is printed here by kind permission of its author, the latter was written on invitation.

The book starts with a discussion of the main three factors in foreign language teaching: the teacher, the learner and the method. (F. Martin). This article is followed by a plea for the levelling, in the interest of communicative language teaching, of the impregnable walls that foreign language departments in Universities, Training Colleges and schools erect around themselves. (J.P.Menting).
Pragmatic failure or, perhaps better, communicative interference due to differences between the L1 and L2 cultures, is the topic of Philip

Riley's article. He sets up a system for describing discourse in such a way as to make contrastive statements possible.

What the communicative approach entails for the teacher's professional and personal qualities and for the learner's personal and social identity is put forward in the two following contributions by Dora Dolle & Gerard M. Willems and Gerard M. Willems respectively. The former concentrates on the demands made on the teacher's non-verbal behaviour and interactive skills, while the latter shows how the communicative approach allows the learner much more autonomy in deciding what he wants to learn of the language and how he wants to do it.

The three articles that follow are more practical in offering the reader hints for direct classroom use. Jan Menting brings communicative principles to bear on the teaching of reading comprehension thus enriching the traditional arsenal of analytical instruments at our disposal.

David Whybra, in his first contribution, makes a case for van Ek's "whole pedagogy" of foreign language teaching integrating language learning into the socio-cultural dimension of linguistic and aesthetic communication.

Eminently practical in its ideas for infiltrating language teaching based on structural syllabuses with communicative principles is Wendy Scott's & Ninian Millar's article that follows. Every teacher will find here something that he can use if he believes in generating real communication in the classroom and in letting his learners "get on with it".

The same principle, mainly because of its motivating force, is at the bottom of Wout de Jong's contribution. He makes a case, on pedagogical grounds, for starting with young beginners along communicative lines. The inherent flexibility of this approach guarantees sufficient scope for the learner's needs, objectives, interests and learning style.

In his second contribution, David Whybra invokes the help of a very powerful medium in communicative language teaching, television, in order to provide the living context to put formalised and goal-oriented exercises into perspective. The natural creativity of students and pupils is used to further language learning and acquisition. A time-hal-

lowed procedure in language teaching like repetition acquires a completely natural aspect if it is used in order to prepare a scene in a video sequence.

There should be no language teaching, along whatever lines, without clear objectives, and when we say objectives we say testing. The last article in this collection suggests a way in which communicative, learner-centred testing may be set up. Perhaps its clearest message is that we should test as we teach. Consequently, many of Andrew Harrison's ideas in this article can also be used in teaching. Especially interesting are Harrison's suggestions for marking on the basis of a model. If the reader feels, perhaps, that the role of the learner in the assessment of his communicative competence is somewhat neglected by Harrison, he must realise that these suggestions are made with the secondary school situation in mind, in which the learners are in a less favourable position to judge their own performance than grown-ups who, for private reasons, decide to take up the study of a foreign language.

As can be seen, the contributions to this collection are both eclectic and for the most part practical. Rather than championing one particular methodology, or simply drawing up a list of recipes and ingredients for classroom activities, the SWG is interested in the social and pedagogical conditions which make these activities genuinely communicative and effective. At the very heart of this problem is the teacher's role and his social, linguistic and pedagogical competence. For, clearly, if the objectives of a language teaching syllabus are extended to include various aspects of communicative competence, the demands being made on the teacher increase correspondingly. No longer is it sufficient to know the rules of grammar: the teacher must also master the sociolinguistic "rules of use without which the rules of grammar are useless" (Dell Hymes).

The editors are thoroughly aware of how everything in the communicative "arena" is in a flux. They are, therefore, also aware of the fact that it is not an easy task to edit a collection of articles meant as a general introduction into it. Although the views expressed by individual

authors in their articles are their own and not necessarily those of the other authors or the editors, the latter hope that this book is a coherent, readable and, above all, useful and useable introduction into this "arena", and also forms a positive contribution to the on-going communicative debate.

February, 1984.

Nijmegen, Gerard M. Willems.
Nancy, Philip Riley.

Relationships between the Teacher, the Learner and Methods in Foreign Language Teaching:

some basic considerations

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TEACHER, THE LEARNER AND METHODS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING: SOME BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

F. Martin-Molero

Introduction

It is obviously very difficult in only a few pages to cover all the relationships between the most important factors in Foreign and Modern Language Teaching (hereafter F/MLT): these are the teacher, the learner and the method. But in attempting this task I hope to clarify, as far as is possible, the causes of success or failure in language learning since it has frequently been attributed to one or other of them by non-specialists.

The Method has often been said to be the cause of success or failure in language teaching, as it is the method which determines the "amount of language" as well as the "how" of the language teaching. Advertising of the "con el método tal hable Inglés en tres meses" type would have us believe that the method is the most important and almost the only

decisive factor of success in language learning.
For others, the most important factor is the learner, since ultimately it is he or she who does the actual language learning, which therefore greatly depends on his or her natural ability, effort, motivation and so on. From this point of view, then, the method is not really so important, it is the learner that matters.
Yet a third approach to the problem leads to the conclusion that the cause of success or failure is the teacher, since it is the teacher who is in charge of applying the method. In themselves, methods are neither good nor bad, runs this argument, it all depends on how they are used: the teacher is entirely responsible for success or failure since in the end it is he or she who makes the method work well or badly.
In the following pages we shall try to analyse the complex relationships between the three factors involved in this problem and to show just how trivial the above arguments are.

I - Foreign and modern language teaching methods

One of the definitions of "teaching methods" given in the Encyclopaedia of Educational Research is that they "are patterns of teacher behaviour". When this is applied to F/MLT, those different patterns of behaviour are due to different theories and descriptions of language and language learning. But the meaning of the term "method" also depends on what actually happens in the classroom and on the different people using the term (administrators, teachers, researchers, text-book and materials writers, etc.). Does the term "method" apply to the quantity and selection of the language to be taught, to teaching procedures, - or to both? The relevance of Aristotle's definition (of learning) - "habitus cum ratione factivus", - needs further consideration as well; otherwise a lack of understanding of what "method" really means can only lead to endless and fruitless discussions.
The first question one needs to be able to answer in order to analyse a method for the purposes of description, evaluation or comparison is this: what are F/MLT methods? In other words, what are their essential dimensions, their most important characteristics?

Writing in 1965, Mackey identified four essential dimensions which he considered to be "inherent characteristics" of a method: these were:

1) Selection of the part of language a method intends to teach since it is impossible to teach the whole of a language. What exact amount of phonetics, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, semantics? From what type of language? For what objectives, level and duration? With what criteria?

2) Gradation of the language for teaching purposes. In what order is it going to be taught, since again not everything selected can be taught at once. How is the language structured? What are the phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical and semantic groupings? In what sequences, length and combinations?

3) Presentation techniques in order to communicate the language already selected and graded. Is the spoken and written language taught simultaneously or separately? If so in what order? With what spacing-stages? Is the native language used? If so, how is it used: with translation, explanations or both? If the native language is not used, what procedures does the method employ : ostensive, pictorial media, contextual? What variety and quantity of procedures?

4) Repetition to enable the learner to use the language independently. In order to achieve fluency a great amount of practice is needed in the context of communication; and in order to achieve accuracy, errors or at least a frequent appearance of them should be avoided/ prevented. And what kind of repetition is prescribed: operational, variational, rote? Does the practice integrate oral and written codes? If one, which one? And, with what variety of practice?

Even this attempt to generalise about methods clearly reflects the theories and descriptions of language and language learning which underpin it, in the same way as any specific method does. Mackey's first two items of "inherent characteristics" are based more on a view of language as the object of linguistics than as a means of communication: his second two similarly reflect the psychological principles and pre-occupa-

tions of the time. This is not to suggest that the characteristics selected by Mackey are not still of considerable importance, but it does underline the very relative nature of such attempts to analyse methods. Nowadays, most applied linguists would want to say considerably more about "the context of communication" and would be far less categorical about the importance of repetition and of avoiding errors and in so doing would be faithfully reflecting their linguistic and psychological principles and pre-occupations.

For ordinary teaching purposes it is neither necessary nor possible to develop fully all the concepts implied in this discussion of "inherent characteristics". However, in those cases where teachers decide on methods themselves (i.e. where the method is not imposed by the school) they should be capable of evaluating methods along these lines.

As we have seen, the linguistic theories and descriptions and the theories of learning which underlie F/MLT methods differ, and the methods themselves therefore differ along the four different dimensions which shape their profile (see the comparative studies of methods in Mackey, 1965; Martin, 1981). F/MLT methods can be objectively measured and evaluated, and such evaluation must precede any serious evaluation of their application, for obviously, "a method is one thing and the teaching of it quite another". As Mackey puts it, "this fallacy of evaluating methods by their results is as common as that of evaluating the teaching by the methods used".

There are many different types of F/MLT methods, but for obvious reasons we cannot analyse them here. However, a few points of general interest and validity can be made:

A good method is no guarantee of good teaching. It is no good blaming the method if the teaching is ineffective, any more than it is complaining about a good car without petrol or one which is in the hands of someone who is unable to drive it.

Good teaching is not always a guarantee of good learning either, for it is what the learners do that makes them learn. Hence the saying that "sometimes students learn in spite of their teachers".

Evaluating method in terms of teaching is thus bound to lead to erro-

neous conclusions, or to hinder serious attempts to solve the problem, or both. It is this, together with the quest for THE method, which has plunged FLT methodology research into an ocean of futile work for nearly a century. No method is best in any absolute sense. In other words, there is no such thing as the method; there are only methods which are better suited to specific situations in terms of objectives, needs, age, class size, level, time, etc.

This explains the present marked tendency to watch how students learn rather than to study how best they can be taught (Ney, 1976). For example, the 1975 TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Convention in Los Angeles included a sub-section on the development of study skills in the learner and the teacher's role in this development. Similarly, the "acquisition versus learning" dichotomy is being paid special attention by those hoping better to understand the second language learning process. This is a further reason for the increasing interest in studying learner characteristics, cognitive style and behaviour in the classroom.

Experience has shown that neither theory nor methods have withstood the rigours of time and evaluation, and the general trend is now towards communicative approaches and a socio-cultural emphasis in language study (Philips, 1983; Riley, 1982; Dolle-Willemsen, Menting & Willems, 1983, etc.).

II - The Learner

It is important to ensure that a method is suitable for a particular learner or group of learners from at least the following points of view:

a) Learner's aptitudes, general intelligence, memory and attention - because of the important rôle they play in comprehension, imitative ability in speech, etc.

b) Learners' needs and interests. The method should match the learners' motives for language learning (speaking purposes, translating, reading, etc.).

c) Age and level. Age is important, since choosing an integrated me-

thod (i.e. introducing reading and writing from the very beginning) may not be at all suitable for young children. Level must be taken into account, since the method should be adapted to the student's knowledge of the target language.

d) Time available: the pace, rhythm and duration of the course are crucial, since learning to speak a language fluently and accurately requires time and practice.

As was stated above, present-day research in this field:

1. Focusses on psycholinguistics
- on how the student learns the second language, on different cognitive styles and classroom behaviour;
- on the student's interests and motives: in reality, the inclusion as far as is possible of the student in decision-making, ensures that these aspects are taken into consideration.

2. Focusses on sociolinguistics
- language teaching is seen as a means of communication emphasising the sociocultural background, which implies the systematic teaching of communicative values (see Widdowson, 1978, pp. 15-18; and Rivers, 1976, pp. 28-34).

However, we do not as yet possess a scientific theory of language acquisition and learning (Sinclair, 1978, p. 167). Bever (1970, p. 350) is also categorical in this respect: "I've said little about the effects of general principles of learning on linguistic structure because I don't know anything about how language (or anything else) is learned, while I do have some initial understanding of the mechanisms of perception". But although psychological theorizing about language learning is still in its early stages, applied linguists cannot just sit back with folded arms waiting for more advanced knowledge to design more efficient techniques and methods. Nor can we ignore the learner's right to expect that years of work in modern language teaching will have produced some useful, practical knowledge. This puts F/ML didactics in a somewhat embarrassing position as regards both its theoretical foundations and its practical applications (methods, techniques,

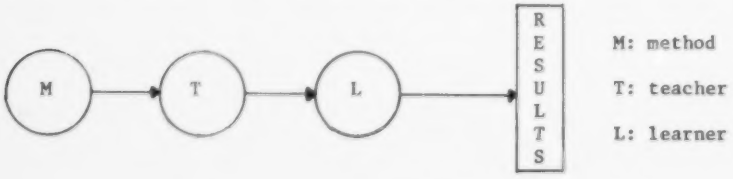
strategies, etc.).

It is becoming clear, however, that this situation is largely due to a double confusion. Firstly, most of the so-called "models of learning" proposed by psychologists are in fact no more than models of teaching i.e. accounts of how one person can influence another's behaviour; recent work on (language) learning as such ("intake" as opposed to "input") by both mainstream and humanistic psychologists has provided us with a number of positive insights into the processes concerned, which will be briefly discussed elsewhere in this book. The second confusion has been dubbed the "psycholinguistic fallacy" and it consists in psychologists and linguists mistaking their descriptive models for reality, that is, in assuming that what they note down on paper is "what happens" to or in a speaker in real life.

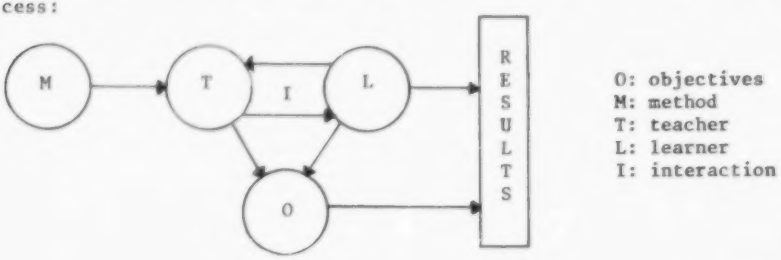
Recent work in discourse analysis and in particular the study of the learners' inter-language and of their communicative strategies both in and out of the classroom, is providing a healthy antidote to this, as well as providing considerable support for the proponents of communicative methodology.

III - The Teacher

The suitability of a method is obviously related not only to the learner but to the teacher as well: after all, the teacher is the one who handles it and to handle a method properly it is essential to know it. However, the teacher needs to know more than just how to use the method efficiently. He or she also has to know the learner (see above) and the teaching context in which the method is going to be applied. The success of an F/ML course should be seen as a matter of the interdependence between these three main factors:



In order to choose the most appropriate method in a specific teaching situation, the teacher should be capable of evaluating methods, or should be provided with reliable evaluations by experts before the actual teaching begins.
This is the only way in which the teacher or expert can make a suitable choice i.e. one which takes into account the teaching context (learners' needs, interests, levels, time, class size, etc.) and which is made in the full knowledge of what methods are in fact available.
If the teaching context permits it (age, level, needs, etc.) F/MLT objectives should be analysed/stated together with the learners so that they can participate as far as is possible in the decision making process:



Teaching the learner "how to learn" is to add a most efficient dimension to the language learning process. Efficient teaching always involves facilitating or even provoking effective learning: it "focusses more and more on the learner" (Brumfit, 1976). And if the approach is a communicative one, the linguistic items will be learnt in their cultural context "thus providing not only the patterns of the language but also the trappings that make them meaningful". (Gladstone, 1969).

IV - Implications for teacher-training

The implications of the above discussion for both theory (Teacher-training models) and practice (the teacher-trainers) are obvious.
Teachers should be capable of dealing with their task efficiently within the complex framework which has been so briefly outlined. This means that in the training of language teachers, the following factors should

be taken into account.

1. Preexisting (personal) characteristics which are not a matter of training but of preselection, since there are some personality traits which influence teaching outcomes (Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 1982, pp. 1873-1915).
2. Professional characteristics which are the direct consequence of the teacher-traning curriculum, both theory and practice. "Teacher Competence" is conceived as a repertoire of knowledge and skills or "know-how".

   2.1 Knowledge of:

   a. The target language (near-native fluency and accuracy).
   b. Macrolinguistics (psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, linguistics and applied linguistics).
   c. Didactics (methods, methods analysis and evaluation, strategies and techniques for teaching interaction, etc.).

   2.2 Skills in:

   a. Classroom management.
   b. Educational technology, in both the wider and narrower senses:
      - Applying scientific principles to classroom practice;
      - Handling the audio-visual equipment of materials required by the methods to be used.

This training must itself be carried out using the self-same active methods which the teachers are expected to put into practice. However, good training will never do away with the need for regular in-service workshops, seminars and courses if we are to train efficient M/FLT professionals.

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Les Cloisons Étanches entre les Didactiques

LES CLOISONS ÉTANCHES ENTRE LES DIDACTIQUES

Jan P. Menting

Préambule

De plus en plus, dans la formation des professeurs de langue et dans les cours professionnels de recyclage, s'efforce-t-on de mettre l'accent sur l'enseignement communicatif, non seulement parce que c'est dans le vent, mais surtout parce que cette approche est la plus riche et parce qu'elle est la meilleure garantie pour atteindre l'essentiel des objectifs généralement adoptés dans le domaine de l'expression orale: si nous enseignons une langue étrangère, il faut au moins, ou en tout cas, que l'élève apprenne non pas "à parler", mais à communiquer vraiment, même à un niveau bien modeste.

Préparer le professeur à cet enseignement communicatif est une tâche

difficile, pour différentes raisons. D'abord, cet enseignement n'est que vaguement défini, et son domaine mal délimité. Puis, la didactique est ardue parce qu'il y a beaucoup d'obstacles et de handicaps, par exemple les classes nombreuses, les salles trop exigues et mal équipées, les barrières psychiques, surtout chez les élèves plus agés. Enfin, pour bien réussir un tel enseignement, il faut que le professeur ait une disposition d'esprit qui aille au delà des qualités normalement requises pour le professorat (1).

Il y a pourtant, me semble-t-il, une autre entrave à la réalisation de ce qu'on est convenu d'appeler "l'enseignement communicatif", tant à l'école même que dans la formation des professeurs: c'est le fait que l'enseignement communicatif fait l'impression d'être "décousu", difficile à structurer, à organiser dans un curriculum longitudinal. En fait, il l'est souvent, décousu, il doit l'être, dirait-on, par définition.

Au niveau scolaire, le problème est le choix qu'il faut faire entre l'approche systématique (à base de la structure de la langue et de la contrastivité) et la création de véritables situations de communications, où les problèmes de langue se posent, évidemment, mais de façon très diverse et peu contrôlable. En plus, il y a le facteur du temps: il est aisé - tout le monde le sait - de remplir tout le temps disponible par un enseignement de "faits de langue", quitte à remettre à plus tard (à trop tard) leur emploi en situation; d'autre part, l'enseignement communicatif lui aussi "bouffe du temps". Enfin, il y a les élèves, qui veulent bien apprendre à communiquer, mais qui aspirent également à des connaissances précises, saisissables dans cette matière glissante qu'est pour ceux cette langue ètrangère.

Au niveau de la formation, souvent les futurs professeurs viennent à nous à un moment où ils sont déjà à mi-chemin. Ils ont déjà fait pas mal d'etudes: scolaires d'abord, étude de la langue et de la littérature ensuite. Ils arrivent à un moment où, du point de vue de l'enseignement communicatif, ils sont déjà déformés: ils ont une perception de la langue et de son enseignement - et un ensemble d'instruments

d'analyse et d'apprentissage - qui semblent entraver d'autres façons de voir et de traivailler, et dont il est très difficile de se défaire.

C'est cet état des choses qui m'a mené à concevoir un enseignement qui est d'ordre structural, intellectuel, de l'ordre des connaissances, certes, mais qui pourrait constituer, à mon avis, un support important à l'enseignement communicatif; qui pourrait le débarasser de préoccupations peu compatibles avec sa nature et ses objectifs, et grâce auquel on pourrait réaliser un gain de temps considérable.

Introduction

Les contacts entre les langues enseignées à l'école et entre leurs enseignants, sont maigres, pour ne pas dire inexistants. Même au niveau de la formation des professeurs, les etudiants bien souvent ne se rendent pas compte du fait qu'ils sont en train de faire pratiquement la même chose que leurs collègues pour une autre langue, deux salles plus loin. Il faut une matière commune au programme, telle que la linguistique appliquée pour qu'ils se voient et qu'ils prennent conscience de leur problématique identique. Et encore... Mais rares sont les écoles où les responsables des différentes langues étrangères s'efforcent de créer une didactique coordonnée, dans laquelle chaque langue pourrait profiter d'échanges fructueux et d'idées, de matériaux et de dispositifs développés en commun. Il est certain que ce cloisonnement entre didactiques a libéré la voie à un enseignement plus sain, voie qui restait bloquée par des exercices de langue (de système) plutôt que d'emploi (de parole), par une éternelle remise à plus tard du plein-emploi de la langue en situation, remise à trop tard, évidemment. Mais est-il également valable quand il s'agit d'élèves qui en sont encore aux débuts de leur apprentissage, qui sont encore en plein développement même dans leur langue maternelle, et à qui on accorde vraiment très peu de temps pour maîtriser deux ou trois systèmes d'expression et de communication différents?

Des compétences de base

N'est-il pas raisonnable de supposer que dans l'apprentissage d'un complexe de connaissances et d'aptitudes (une langue, par exemple, mais aussi un jeu, un sport, telle activité professionelle), l'on mette à profit un certain "savoir de base" acquis de par, et à travers l'apprentissage et la maîtrise d'autres complexes comparables (une autre langue, un autre jeu ou sport, etc.)?

Est-ce que pour les langues ces "compétences de base " - terme que j'adopte provisoirement, faute de mieux - sont saisissables et descriptibles de façon à en tirer le maximum de profit dans l'enseignement? Peut on trouver un niveau de description - et, dans la didactique, d'application - tel qu'on soit suffisamment éloigné de la réalité de la parole pour ne pas courir le risque de créer de mauvaises habitudes ou de renforcer des tendances à l'interférence, et tel que le soutien qu'on attend de ces compétences de base puisse être optimal? Dans l'esquisse ci-après je distingue, au-dessous du niveau de la parole, ou de l'expression, un niveau de "réglementation grammaticale immédiate", ou de programmation. Il importe de viser à une séparation des systèmes à ces niveaux-là, et d'y arriver le plus vite et le plus complètement possible. C'est d'un niveau en dessous de ceux-là, niveau qui n'intervient pas du point de vue de l'interférence et de la séparation des systèmes, que l'on pourrait tirer profit par des comparaisons d'éléments du système déjà acquis et d'éléments du système à acquérir qui passent par un intermédiaire commun (cf. p. 76).

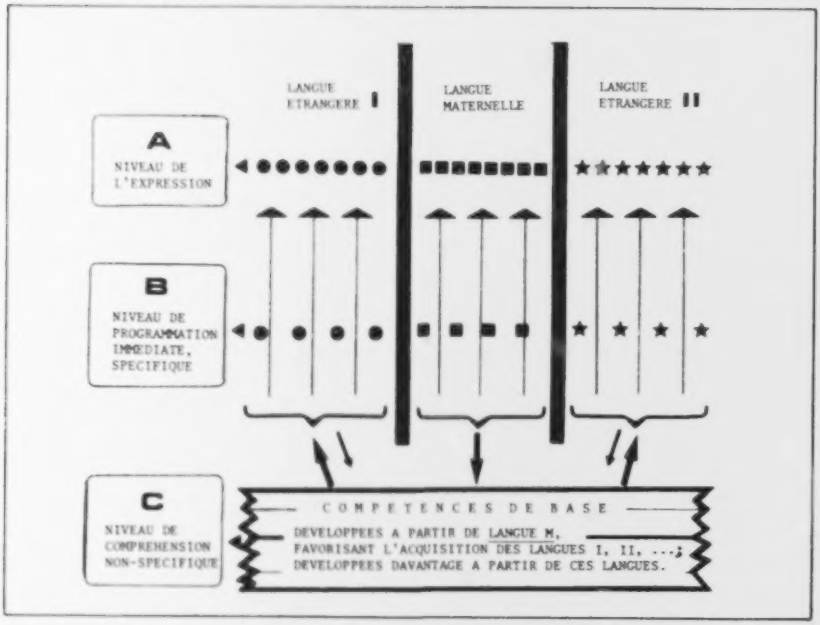
Ce que je voudrais essayer de trouver est, pour ainsi dire, d'ordre psycholinguistique plutôt que linguistique et concerne ce qui est en jeu quand on est en train d'enseigner ou d'acquérir un nouveau complexe de connaissances et d'aptitudes. Celui-ci doit se "faire une place" à côté d'un complexe qui a déjà accaparé tout l'espace psychique du sujet apprenant, mais peut constituer, je présume, une aide puissante.

Qu'il me soit permis d'illustrer par quelques exemples quelle pourrait être, à mon avis et selon l'expérience que j'en ai, l'utilité didactique de ce que j'ai appelé provisoirement les "compétences de

base" dans l'enseignement des langues:

- Une rapide analyse des systèmes phonologiques du néerlandais et du français suffit à détecter les phonèmes français qui manquent dans le système néerlandais. Suffirait-il, par la suite, d'entrainer les élèves sur ces points particuliers pour que leur prononciation, du point de vue des sons, soit acceptable? Rien n'est moins vrai. Toutes les voyelles et toutes les consonnes sonnent faux en français: elles sont réalisées "à la néerlandaise". C'est que, à base des mêmes données physiques, et avec pratiquement le même tableau des consonnes et des voyelles, la réalisation des sons est légèrement différente sur toute la ligne. La "base d'articulation", quelle qu'en soit la nature est différente: la prononciation du français se caractérise, par rapport à celle du néerlandais, par une plus forte tension musculaire, se traduisant dans une plus grande concision, ou netteté, de chaque son pris isolément (sans bavures , sans attaques audibles, sans sons transitoires, sans tendances à la diphtongaison ou au lâchement); par une "exagération" dans la prise de position des organes, se traduisant dans une labialisation et dans un écartement des lèvres plus marqués; par le caractère plus (pré)palatal de différents phonèmes; par une tendance à la syllabation ouverte; par l'égalité en durée des syllabes; par une intonation et une accentuation plus rigides.

Ma thèse est que, si l'on veut dans l'enseignement faire quelque chose sur le terrain de la prononciation, l'amélioration est beaucoup plus grande et plus rapide quand d'une façon ou d'une autre, l'élève est conscient de la problématique sous-jacente. Il faut s'attaquer à ces causes centrales plutôt qu'utiliser des exercices de répétition, dans lesquels sont présentés à tour de rôle les différents sons et aspects suprasegmentaux du français. Il va de soi que dans cette conception, le professeur en premier lieu doit avoir conscience de ce dont il s'agit: non seulement il doit pouvoir entendre les fautes de prononciation, mais il doit aussi être capable de les interpréter, de distinguer entre ce qui est fortuit et ce qui est caractéristique pour tel individu ou tel groupe, il doit savoir grouper les fautes et les ramener à des causes centrales, disposer de moyens thérapeutiques.


LANGUE ETRANGERE I
LANGUE MATERNELLE
LANGUE ETRANGERE II
A
NIVEAU DE L'EXPRESSION
B
NIVEAU DE PROGRAMMATION IMMEDIATE, SPECIFIQUE
C
NIVEAU DE COMPREHENSION NON-SPECIFIQUE
COMPETENCES DE BASE
DEVELOPPEES A PARTIR DE LANGUE M, FAVORISANT L'ACQUISITION DES LANGUES I, II, ...; DEVELOPPEES DAVANTAGE A PARTIR DE CES LANGUES.

- L'emploi de certains temps et certains modes du français (surtout l'imparfait, le passé simple, le passé défini, le futur, le conditionnel, le subjonctif) donne bien du mal à l'élève néerlandais. Il en est de même du "Present" et du "Past Continuous" de l'anglais, du "Konjunktiv" de l'allemand. Une bonne explication, à un niveau central, des catégories de pensée du "temps", du "mode", de "l'aspect" qui dans leur essence sont égales pour les différentes langues, y compris le néerlandais - puisqu'elles semblent répondre à des besoins d'expression et de communication de l'homme occidental, mais qui diffèrent dans leur réalisation dans les différentes langues en jeu - peut fournir à l'élève un cadre profond de référence où entreront plus facilement les faits spécifiques pour telle langue.

- Enfin dans l'enseignement "communicatif", nous approchons l'élève de différents côtés (la langue maternelle, bien souvent, est de la partie, cette fois-ci) de manière semblable ou parallèle; ici encore, de bonnes explications peuvent faire comprendre à l'élève la différence entre la

langue comme une matière à apprendre et la langue comme une façon d'être, une façon de fonctionner en situation. Il verra mieux le pourquoi et le comment des tâches que les professeurs de langue lui imposent, des rôles qu'il doit assumer dans toutes sortes de jeux astucieux qu'on a pu inventer, ces derniers temps, pour l'enseignement des langues. Un avantage secondaire pourrait résider dans le fait qu'il disposerait ainsi d'un instrument modeste lui permettant de juger et de mieux situer ce qui, dans la vie réelle, se passe autour de lui du point de vue de la langue et de l'emploi qu'il en fait.

Je présente ici une liste de domaines où les didactiens, ceux de langue maternelle et ceux des langues étrangères, pourraient trouver la matière première qui, sous une forme élaborée, fournirait à l'élève une base de compréhension et de référence pour tout ce qu'il doit faire et entreprendre dans l'apprentissage des langues en jeu. Elle est provisoire mais je la donne telle quelle, dans l'espoir d'être compris pour l'essentiel de ma thèse (voir page ci-après).

Si je propose d'intégrer dans cet enseignement des approches visant à créer des prises de conscience générales sur certains "notions", certains faits communs à toutes les langues enseignées, c'est surtout pour le rendre plus efficace. Car s'il est parfaitement vrai que l'apprentissage d'une langue est avant tout l'acquisition d'un système complexe d'aptitudes, et non pas d'un corps de connaissances intellectuelles, il est plus que probable aussi que des approches de nature "compréhensive" peuvent aider ce processus d'acquisition.

Une formation commune?

Si l'on aborde le problème de la formation des professeurs, il y a deux choses à distinguer: la connaissance de la matière en tant que telle, et sa traduction en didactique.

Pour ce qui est de la matière, on peut supposer que l'etudiant bien formé a déjà rencontré, au cours des études précédant sa formation professionelle proprement dite, les différentes notions qui sont en jeu et dont il aura besoin. Cela vaut du moins pour l'étudiant universitai-

re. Pour les étudiants d'institutions spécialisées dans la formation de professeurs, lesquelles, de manière générale, et pour différentes, raisons, disposent de moins de temps, l'on peut se demander si l'enseignement nécessairement comprimé et pragmatique permet d'approfondir certaines questions, de faire des digressions utiles. Ici, il faudrait concevoir sans doute des cours géneraux, destinés à tous les étudiants futurs professeurs de langue, une préfiguration, en quelque sorte, de ce nouvel aspect de l'enseignement scolaire des langues auquel ils se préparent.

Pour ce qui est de la traduction de ces notions générales en didactiques possibles, c'est le programme de formation professionelle qui, tout naturellement, sera le lieu indiqué pour la réaliser. Ici encore, je préconiserais des cours et des travaux en commun pour les futurs professeurs des différentes langues, y compris la langue maternelle. Cela non seulement parce qu'il s'agit d'une matière commune, mais aussi parce qu'on peut s'attendre à ce que les programmes de formation linguistique dans les différents départements divergent de différentes manières: une formation centralisée, sur ce point, créerait un dénominateur commun. Peut-être même que de telles rencontres à la base, au berceau plutôt, du professorat, favoriseraient la liquidation des sempiternelles querelles entre enseignants de matières à un haut degré identiques, pour faire place à des discussions sensées et concrètes sur une matière - une cause! - commune.

C'est la linguistique appliquée, à mon sens, qui, par sa position, est la mieux placée et la mieux équipée pour donner forme à des idées de ce genre, tant pour ce qui est de l'enseignement que pour les recherches à entreprendre. A l'intersection de la psychologie de l'aprentissage, de la psycho-linguistique, de la ou des linguistiques et des sciences de l'éducation, elle doit être à même de définir et de concrétiser cette matière interdisciplinaire et de favoriser son implantation dans la formation professionelle et dans l'enseignement scolaire.

Une didactique scolaire?

Quelles formes pourrait prendre l'enseignement de cette matière au niveau de l'élève? La réalisation dépendra dans une large mesure de la situation locale: le pays, les langues enseignées, le genre d'école, le type d'élèves et leur âge, le temps disponible pour la réalisation des programmes des différentes langues.

Je pense que la décision sur la statégie à suivre doit être prise, au niveau de l'institution, par l'ensemble des professeurs de langues. A partir de là, deux possibilités principales se présentent:

- la matière reste au niveau des professeurs. Ils se sont concertés pour dresser un corps commun de connaissances et d'approches, dont chacun fait usage à sa guise. Si, dans son enseignement, on ressent le besoin de mettre à profit tel élément de ce corpus, on le fera dans l'esprit de ce qui a été convenu;

Fournir à l'élève d'une façon ou d'une certaine compréhension dans les domaines suivants:	susceptible d'être profitable, directement ou indirectement à:
1. Psycholinguistique les processus de compréhension et d'expression - le stockage dans la mémoire - le processus de la conceptualisation - phénomènes comme l'oubli, le blocage, l'interférence - l'individu bilingue - compétence/performance.	la compréhension générale du phénomène du langage; la facilitation générale de l'apprentissage.
2. Phonétique consonne, voyelle - accent, intonation, syllabation - sourd/sonore - palatal/vélaire - arrondi/non arrondi - la notion de "base d'articulation" - quantité, diphtongaison, tension, relâchement, assimilation.	la prononciation, la production orale.

3. Syntaxe principales catégories syntaxiques - les notions de temps, de mode, d'aspect (et quelques autres).	la compréhension et la production écrite et parlée, la facilitation générale de l'apprentissage
4. Morphologie déclinaison - conjugaison - désinences - composition - dérivation - genre, personne - "famille de mots" - classe de mots - axes syntagmatique et paradigmatique.	idem
5. Etymologie changements de sens et de forme.	la compréhension générale du phénomène du langage la facilitation de l'apprentissage
6. Famille des langues parenté - influences politico-économiques - disparition - substrat/superstrat-langue/dialecte - emprunt - termes internationaux.	la compréhension générale du phémomène du langage la facilitation de l'apprentissage.
7. Sémantique développement du système conceptuel (mot, concept) - conceptualisation différente selon les langues - expression idiomatique, proverbe.	idem
8. Emplois de la langue communication - situation - rôle - registre - fonction - écrit/parlé - sociolecte, idéolecte - jargon - langue/parole - contraintes sociales.	la facilitation de l'apprentissage; la compréhension des comportements linguistiques

9. Ecoute et lecture de textes comment écoutons-nous, lisons-nous? - intensif/extensif - stratégies d'interprétation fondées sur ce qui est déjà connu - suivre les grandes lignes - retenir l'essentiel - comment prendre des notes, rédiger des résumés.	la compréhension orale et écrite
10 Expression en langue les différentes façons de dire la même chose - la stratification des significations de l'énoncé - rédiger un texte - préparer une présentation orale - la structuration d'un texte.	la production orale et écrite
11. Culture et civilisation différentes acceptions des "notions" - rapports culture/civilisation/peuple/pays/langue - impact de la civilisation sur la langue - le "génie" de la langue - le "caractère" d'un peuple - différences et similitudes interculturelles - caractère relatif des conceptions.	la compréhension générale de la culture
12. Littérature la langue au service de préoccupations artistiques - genres, formes, techniques littéraires - courants littéraires et leur expression nationale.	la compréhension générale de la culture
13. Stratégies d'apprentissage styles cognitifs individuels - méthodes de travail.	idem

- on s'efforce d'inscrire cette matière dans l'enseignement sous une forme explicite, par exemple une sorte de cours général de langue, d'emplois de la langue, de stratégies d'apprentissage. Ce cours pourrait être dispensé en relation étroite avec les programmes des différentes langues. Il vise à développer chez l'élève des connaissances et des aptitudes centrales, à créer des prises de conscience, à fournir à l'élève une compréhension de ce qu'est l'apprentissage d'une langue, et de bonnes méthodes de travail.

Développant quelque peu cette deuxième possibilité, j'entrevois la perspective suivante (rêvons):
Il existe un manuel, ou un ensemble de livrets, de quelques centaines de pages, en langue maternelle, facile et agréable à lire. Le manuel est subdivisé en quatre ou cinq sections, dans lesquelles sont groupés les sujets qui vont ensemble, ou bien organisées selon l'ordre d'urgence et d'accessibilité pour l'élève.

La terminologie est uniforme. On a choisi les termes les plus généralement utilisés, même si, dans telles perspectives scientifiques, ils sont considérés comme inadéquats.

Le texte est agrémenté d'exemples clairs et pertinents dans (les) différentes langues et, si c'est utile, de dessins, de schémas, de photos. Il y a des exercices, si la matière s'y prête.

Il y a peut-être, comme auxiliaires, des diapositives, des cartes murales, des 'flash-cards', des exemples auditifs.

D'un commun accord, les professeurs de langue de tel établissement décident de l'organisation de cet enseignement: qui en prendra la responsabilité? "Combien d'heures de cours chaque langue doit-elle sacrifier?"; Pour des programmes s'étendant sur quatre à cinq années, à raison de deux ou de trois heures par semaine et par langue, il faut compter une centaine d'heures de cours pour cet enseignement général, doublés de deux cents heures de travaux individuels, sous forme de devoirs, ou autres. Ces trois cents heures seraient à déduire de l'ensemble du temps disponible pour l'ensemble des langues sur tout le curriculum.

Du moment que l'on est d'accord sur la matière à enseigner et sur les grandes lignes de l'organisation, peu importe quels seront les professeurs responsables de cet enseignement. Ce n'est pas nécessairement le professeur de la langue maternelle. Ils peuvent être deux ou trois pour le faire, chacun possédant certaines spécialisations. En tout cas, il faut que ceux qui se chargent de cet enseignement soient enthousiastes, et qu'ils aient suffisamment de capacités pédagogiques pour donner forme et corps au projet

Il faut également que les autres professeurs les soutiennent et les alimentent d'observations, d'exemples, et que chacun pris à part organise son propre enseignement de façon à tirer le maximum de profit des activités centralisées.

Voilà, dans ses grandes lignes, une didactique possible. Il y a, bien entendu, d'autres formules concevables. Il ne s'agit ici que d'esquisser un enseignement des langues en partie centralisé et intégré au profit de tout le monde.

Conclusion

Deux voies m'ont mené à la prise de position telle que je viens de la formuler dans cet article: l'une, c'est la constatation que ni dans la formation ni dans la pratique de la profession, il n'y a de contacts substantiels entre les langues enseignées; l'autre, de nature plus théorique, est l'hypothèse que le dénominateur commun de différents complexes voisins de connaissances et d'aptitudes est constitué par un corps de notions non spécifiques ("compétences de base") susceptibles de soutenir ou d'améliorer leur maîtrise, et de faciliter l'acquisition d'autres complexes de même nature. Il est plus que probable que l'individu sait en profiter, soit qu'il le fasse à son insu, soit même qu'il en ait conscience et qu'il recherche justement une utilisation optimale de cette base de référence qui est présente en lui.

Il me semble que dans d'autres domaines les enseignants savent mieux en tirer profit que dans le domaine des langues. Il suffit de voir au

travail le professeur de danse, qui alimente son enseignement d'observations et d'exemples tirés d'autres domaines, qui relie tout ce qu'il faut faire pour bien danser aux différentes façons naturelles de se tenir, de marcher, de se mouvoir; que l'on pense à l'entraînement moderne pour les différents sports, où l'on connaît le local d'instruction et le tableau noir et l'analyse de bandes vidéo.

Autrefois, dans l'enseignement des langues, on a cherché, mais de façon trop directe, et surtout trop massive, trop exclusive, une sorte de compréhension en particulier dans la grammaire (accompagnée de traductions et de l'apprentissage de mots isolés). Depuis la deuxième guerre mondiale, les différentes formes d'enseignement direct de l'emploi de la langue ont écarté de plus en plus toute approche "théorique" compréhensive, et par là, à mon avis, on a sacrifié, et un peu à la légère, un soutien et un auxiliaire précieux.

Il s'agit, à mon sens, non pas certes, de restaurer l'ancien régime, mais de repenser le processus de l'acquisition de ces complexes de connaissances, et d'aptitudes extrêmement compliqués que sont les langues, et tirer - le maximum de profit d'approches compréhensives de manière efficace, et sans tomber dans le piège d'autrefois consistant à dispenser des connaissances sur la langue sans relation pratique avec son emploi.

Note:

cf. Dolle-Willemsen, D., Menting, J. & Willems, G.M., (1983), "Communicative Foreign Language Teaching and how it Reflects on the Training of Modern Foreign Language Teaching", European Journal of Teacher Education, Vol 6, no. 2.
et: Dolle, D. & Willems, G.M., "The Communicative Approach to Foreign Language Teaching. The Teacher's Case", pp.87-102 dans ce livre.

Your Slip is Showing:

Communicative Interference in Second-Language Learning

YOUR SLIP IS SHOWING:
Communicative interference in second-language learning

Philip Riley

Introduction

The basic premise of this article is that any second language learning or teaching is an exercise in "contrastive linguistics" since learners filter and assimilate the L2 through the categories and experiences represented by the L1.

The work done in contrastive linguistics proper and, more recently and more valuably, in the study of interlanguage and learners' communicative strategies, has done much to help elucidate the nature of the relationship between L1 and L2 - or rather, between the L1 and the processes by which the L2 is learnt. However, with a very few exceptions, such studies have concentrated on the internal, structural properties of the languages in question and interference has consequently been

seen as the imposition of L1 structures on the L2 at the levels of phonology, lexis and morphology and syntax.

There are though, certain vital aspects of learning a foreign language which are not amenable to description in such structural terms. These are the sociolinguistic rules of use which characterise the communicative competence of the members of a given society. It is not enough to know how to construct grammatically correct sentences: we also need to know how to use situationally appropriate utterances.

This distinction between linguistic competence (the ability to manipulate the internal structures of the language) and communicative competence (knowledge of the external rules of use for that language) is, of course, fundamental to the "communicative" or "functional" approach to second language learning and teaching. However, lists of language functions, and the materials based on them, can give the impression that such rules are limited to the ways in which individual speech acts can be realised and that underlying the variations in realisation there is a finite set of language functions which is universal.

Whilst it is probably true that all languages do have certain functions in common - greeting, thanking, inviting and so on, - the situational features which lead speakers to select a particular realisation vary widely. For example, in many societies the age of one's interlocutor will determine how he or she is to be addressed, and not always in the same way, either, since the value attributed to different age-groups varies considerably from society to society.

It is also true, though, that there are certain functions or speech acts which can only be performed "in" one language, since they are the expression of cultural features which are not shared by the two societies. It is not difficult, for example, to find a language into which it is almost impossible to translate such acts as baptising or claiming an opponent's wicket ("howzat!").

Equally important is that the way discourse is organised also varies culturally. That is, if we stop looking at single functions and start examining sequences of speech acts we find that the selection/ordering

and combination of functions in a given situation will differ in the two languages. Whilst it is probably true that all societies require a greeting to be responded to by a greeting, we have no difficulty in finding cases where thanking is not the appropriate response to the receipt of a gift (or, in other cases, a compliment) and where inviting is not immediately followed by accepting of refusing.

There are other aspects of the organisation of discourse which can also differ considerably from society to society. Two of the most important are address (the distribution of speaking turns based on rights to the floor: who can speak to whom and when) and topic nomination (what subjects are suitable for conversation. These depend largely on the participants' perception of one another and of the situation in general.

We will, therefore, be looking at the ways in which participants in an interaction negotiate meaning, i.e; agree on the meaning of what they are saying. We will then look at the communicative strategies which are available to them to deal with problems in expression or comprehension. Finally, we will be studying pragmatic failure - communicative breakdowns resulting from the inappropriate use of mother-tongue sociolinguistic rules in the second language.

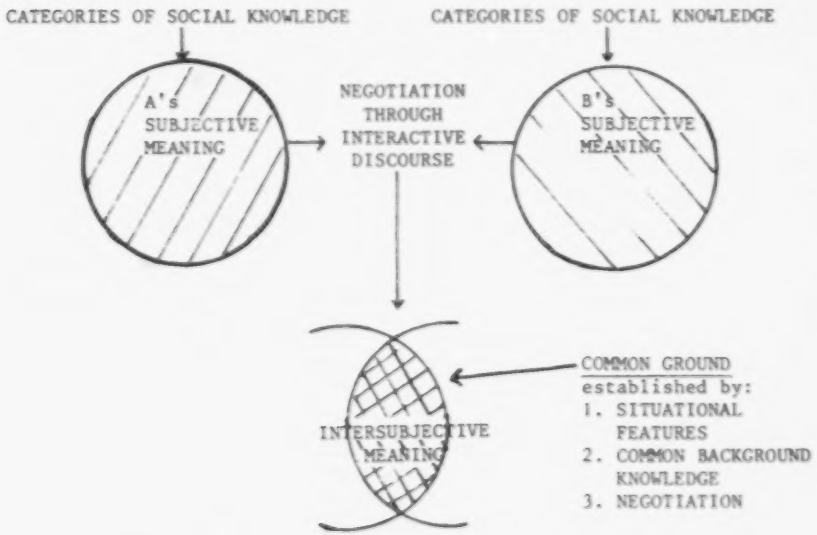
I The Negotiation of Meaning

"Communication is called for when the language user recognises a situation which requires the conveyance of information to establish a convergence of knowledge, so that this situation can be changed in some way. This transaction requires the negotiation of meaning through interaction. I refer to this negotiation as discourse. The term.... therefore refers to the interaction that has to take place to establish the meaning value of utterances and to realise their effectiveness as indicators of illocutionary intent. Thus interactivity is a necessary condition for the enactment of any discourse".

Henry Widdowson (1980)

Every single one of us is a unique personality, with our own history, experience, knowledge, beliefs and predilections. To a greater or lesser extent, we all inhabit a world of our own. When we wish to communicate with other people, we want them to understand what we are saying,

but they cannot understand what we are saying unless they understand us i.e. unless they have the knowledge and information which is necessary for the correct interpretation of our utterances. This is why much discourse is taken up with checking on whether our interlocutors do in fact have the necessary information and with providing information as we think necessary. We describe our private worlds to one another. However, different people need different information, so our choice both of information and of the way we formulate it, will vary according to our appreciation of our interlocutor's capacity to understand. Selecting and exchanging information in this way in order to establish common ground for the interpretation of the discourse is known as the negotiation of meaning. The purpose of negotiation is to bring about an overlap between the two private worlds, to "establish a convergence of knowledge" or a "reciprocity of perspectives", so that, however imperfectly or fleetingly, we inhabit the same world as our interlocutors. This process can be diagrammed thus:



The common ground of any interaction is established by:

1) Situational features which can be perceived by all interactants such as the fact that it is raining, or that one of them is holding a gun - and which can therefore be "taken for granted".
2) Common background knowledge which is already available to both participants (and which is known to be so).
3) Negotiation: giving or obtaining information necessary to the understanding of the discourse.

We will return briefly to points 1. and 2 later. For the moment, though, let us look at a simple (though absolutely typical) example of negotiation:

A is on the telephone, trying to explain to B where he lives, that is, he has a piece of information which he knows B does not possess.

A. 24 rue Marie-Odile, got it?
B. That's Nancy?...
A. Yeah.
B. I don't...
A. Look, you know Laxou
B. Yeah.
A. You know the Avenue de Boufflers?
B. No, I can't say I...
A. You know the road to Toul where it starts by the Renault Garage on one side and the Peugeot Garage on the other?
B. Right, right.
A. That's where the Avenue de Boufflers ends.
B. Yeah right
A. So the Avenue de Boufflers, you go along the Avenue de Boufflers maybe 300 yards, it's off on the right. Just before you get there there's a big service station on your right and rue Marie-Odile's the next turning.
B. Oh yeah, I know.

The piece of knowledge to be shared here is the meaning of "24 rue Marie-Odile", i.e. how it relates to the other parts of the system

"Nancy" - where it is. B indicates that he does not possess this information, at the same time providing a starting point for the negotiation. "That's Nancy?" B is in fact asking for confirmation on a hypothesis: A does not specify which town and since A and B are both in Nancy there is a clear implication that he must be referring to Nancy. (Alternatively, B may already have that much background information, that is, he knows that A lives in Nancy, but not exactly where.)

Having established a starting point, - Nancy, and a general area of reference, A now embarks on a process of progressive refinement. He does this by confirming a series of common points of reference. In fact, his first attempt is a failure ("You know the Ave. de Boufflers?" - "No, I can't say") and he is obliged to try again, going for something slightly less detailed ("You know the road to Toul...?"). As B indicates that each successive landmark is common knowledge ("Right, right") A is able to introduce his new information in relation to them.

We can only explain how to get to our house if we know where our interlocutor will be coming from. This underlines the point that we select the information we give different people according to our perception of their "position" relative to our "position". It is this type of procedure we refer to as the negotiation of personal meanings. It is no use A giving B a map-reference, however objectively precise (-unless B happens to have a copy of the same map, of course). A tries to select from his own store of information those items which are relevant and which he has good reason to believe will be known to B so that he can then introduce new information in a meaningful way by locating it on B's "cognitive map" of Nancy.

A's store of information will be the accumulated result of his experience, beliefs, attitudes, etc.: this is why descriptions (for formulations of place are just one sub-category of referenial descriptions) vary according to speaker as well as hearer. If we stop passers-by for directions to the market place, on might say:

"Well you go to past the Pig and Whistle, keep going till you come to the King's Head, turn left when you get to the Mitre and its right op-

posite", whilst another might say:

"Take the turning on the left of the Church of the Holy Remeeder, follow it all the way to St. Anne's Chapel and it's next to the Cathedral."

Speakers, then, vary their formulations according to their knowledge and on the basis of their perception of the addressee's geographical (in this case) knowledge, which is itself an aspect of identity. In France, where I have lived and worked for nearly 11 years, I am occasionally asked for directions by drivers on the main road which I walk along to get to the university. Their "perception" of me is based on the logic that if I am walking, I must be a local and that if I am a local, I must have the information they want. However, as soon as I open my mouth, my accent contradicts their perception and classification of me. How on earth can an Englishman know how to get to Strasbourg from here? They often display an impatient disbelief in my (absolutely correct!) instructions, or even just drive off in the middle of them.

Our communicative behaviour towards people varies according to what we believe to be their degree of knowledge; we sort them into categories (good friend, child, foreigner, neighbour, lawyer, Irishman, etc.) and we select and formulate our descriptions on the information we believe members of such categories to possess. These social stereotypes are absolutely fundamental to communication. Without them, we wouldn't know how to start, because we wouldn't know where our interlocutor was starting from. Of course, using stereotypes in this way can be dangerous if they are based merely on personal prejudices or if they simply do not fit the facts. It can be embarrassing if we mistake another customer for the shop assistant: but when we classify all women as bad drivers, all teachers as lazy, all old people as "past it", all Frenchmen as intelligent, our perception of reality becomes very distorted - though nonetheless very real to us as individuals.

How do we go about classifying people in this way? How do we decide how we are going to behave and communicate with them? Usually we begin by searching for clues in the situation, in particular, for indexi-

cal information. This term refers to those signs and behaviours which communicate messages about individuals, especially about their social identity and personality. Anything which tells us about the individual's age, sex, occupation, religion, race, nationality, marial status, wealth, state of health or mood, level of education, beliefs or attitudes, is included under this heading. A great deal of this information is non-verbal: we make judgements about people according to the clothes they wear (uniforms, Dior scarves, jeans) hair-styles (coloured, long, bald), the colour of their skin and whether it is wrinkled or not, jewellery (crucifix, wedding ring)... the list is an extremely lengthy one.

As an example of the way in which we use indexical information, consider the following three exchanges:

(i) Two cockneys

A. Where are you from?

B. Lambeth

(ii) Two Englishmen (Englishpersons!)

A. Where are you from?

B. London

(iii) Frenchman and Englishman

A. Where are you from?

B. England

In these exchanges, B is the same individual throughout. But look at the way he changes his information according to his perception of his interlocutors (i.e. the three different A's). This perception is based on his interpretation of the indexical information available to him from their different accents. In exchange (i) B recognises that A is, like himself, a cockney: he concludes that A possesses a detailed knowledge of London and selects his answer accordingly. In exchange (ii) B recognises that A is English but not a Londoner, so he provides A with an answer requiring a different level of information. In exchange (iii), B meets A in France and selects a very general formula indeed.

In all three cases, B selected his formula according to what he thought his interlocutor would understand and how much he thought his interlocutor wanted to know. If, as the conversation continued, it became apparent to B that he had 'underestimated' A in some way, he would then proceed to provide further information. For example, let us imagine that the Frenchman in exchange (iii) turns out to know London far better than B thought (i.e. than this stereotype had led him to expect) the conversation might well proceed as follows:

A. Where are you from?
B. England
A. Really, what part?
B. London. Do you know London?
A. Of course I do! I worked in the City for 5 years.
B. Oh well, then you know Lambeth where I come from...

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of classification and negotiation either to our understanding of language or to its functioning in events i.e. to discourse. The communicative event consists of the emanations from two "I's", like the ripples from two stones thrown into a pool. The production, form, direction and distance of the ripples can only be defined with reference to the stone that produced it. Yet when we communicate, we do the most extraordinary thing: we "put ourselves in someone else's place". We try to ensure that any descriptions we give, any references we make are "seen from their point of view". That is, we select that description which, out of all the possible descriptions available to us, is appropriate to this moment in this interaction with this person. We "try to find common ground". This process, the negotiation of meaning, is universal to all interactive language use: it is not some kind of sophisticated gloss or polite manners. As the social anthropologist Evans-Pritchard has observed:

"What does a Nuer mean when he says, 'I am a man of such-and-such a cieng'? Cieng means 'home', but its precise significance varies with the situation in which it is spoken. If one meets an Englishman in Germany and asks him where his home is, he may reply that it is England. If one meets the same man in London and as him the same question he will tell one that his home is in Oxfordshire, whereas if one

meets him in that county he will tell one the name of the town or village in which he lives. If questioned in his town or village he will mention his particular street, and if questioned in his street he will indicate his house. So it is with the Nuer. A Nuer met outside Nuerland says that his home is cieng Nath, Nuerland... If one asks him in his tribe what is his cieng, he will name his village or tribal section according to the context... If asked in his village he will mention the name of his hamlet or indicate his homestead or the end of the village in which his homestead is situated... The variations in the meaning of the word cieng are not due to the inconsistencies of language, but to the relativity of the group-values to which it refers."

II. 1. Communicative Strategies

So far in this course for the sake of clarity of exposition, all the examples of the negotiation of meaning we have looked at have dealt with the formulation of place. However, it is essential to remember that participants in interactive events can and do negotiate any piece of information or reference which they realise is not initially shared. This can occur between native speakers, as in the following examples:

(i) A: .... one of those French cars
B: Is it a Peugeot?
A: No, Renault, big blue job
B: Oh, I know

(ii) A: I saw your Mum the other day
B: Oh yeah?
A: Not to talk to like. Just through the car window
B: Through the what?
A: The car window
B: What car window?
A: My car window
B: You got a car?
A: I haven't just got the window!

(From "The Likely Lads")

In exchange (i), A and B agree on the "identity" of a particular car, they mutually clarify what it is they are referring to: the conversation can now continue with each participant secure in the knowledge

that they are "talking about the same thing", so that there will be no misunderstanding.

In exchange (ii) A and B are old friends who have not seen one another for some time. While B has been in the army, A has gone up in the world and he now owns a car. He assumes that B knows this, but this is not the case. B has some difficulty adjusting his perception of A to accord with his new information, to classify him as a car-owner. He has to adopt a strategy of requesting more information until he has the knowledge necessary to the understanding of A's utterances (-which knowledge, as we have seen, A believed was already shared).

One very common situation where there is a lack of shared knowledge is, of course, where one of the participants is a foreigner. In such cases, the meanings of certain items - which can generally be taken for granted between native speakers - are not shared and have, therefore, to be negotiated. Consider the following examples of classroom negotiation:

(i) Learner: She's my ... she's in my family
Teacher: Your aunt?
Learner: No. She's married with my brother
Teacher: Oh, your sister-in-law
Learner: Yeah

(ii) Teacher: Russian eggs, prawn cocktail, honeydew melon...
Learner: What's that - "prawn"?
Teacher: What? Oh prawn it's ... they're a sort of sea-food
Learner: Fish
Teacher: No, not fish. Like very small lobsters or "homard".
Learner: Very small (laugh) crevette. Crevette?
Teacher: Yeah. Crevette - prawn.

2nd Learner: Honeydew?
Teacher: You know melon?
2nd Learner: "Melon"?
Teacher: Yes, well it's just a sort of melon
2nd Learner: With honey?
Teacher: Yes. No No No. Honeydew is just a name, it's just a

kind of melon. I think it's green. The skin is green and inside it's yellow.

2nd Learner: Is "pastèque"?

Teacher: I don't know, maybe

2nd Learner: A sort of melon

Teacher: Yeah, a sort of melon.

In exchange (i) the learner does not know the English term "sister-in-law". He therefore adopts, first, a strategy of semantic over-generalisation. But this misfires, as the teacher identifies a wrong referent ("our aunt?"). The learner then switches strategy, providing more information in the form of a circumlocution or description: "She's married with my brother". The teacher is now able to proceed to a correct identification, which the learner confirms.

In exchange (ii) the teacher is going through a menu in English. The learner has a comprehension problem this time, not one of expression. His strategy is to appeal for help. The teacher tries to provide the requisite information, first by giving a general classification ("seafood") then by analogy ("like very small lobsters") followed by a translation ("homard"). At this point the learner thinks he understands ("crevette") but he still wants his hypothesis confirmed ("crevette?"). The teacher provides the confirmation that mutual agreement on this meaning structure has now been reached ("Yeah. Crevette - Prawn").

The second learner now weighs in with a similar problem. What is a "honeydew". The teacher first checks that the learner does in fact know what a melon is, since he wants to adopt the strategy of approximation ("it's just a sort of melon"). However, this does not satisfy the learner, who has recognised "honey" and taken it literally. The teacher is now forced into a description of this particular kind of melon in terms of its significant features. The learner asks for confirmation of the hypothesis by producing a translantion ("Is "pastèque"?"). Unfortunately, the teacher is unable to confirm or disprove this hypothesis. However, this does show that it is not, in the teacher's view at least, terribly important to know what particular kind of melon this is. It

suffices to know, they agree, that it is just "a sort of melon".

In these extracts, we have seen a number of different communication strategies. Since, by definition, a strategy involves (a) a problem and (b) a plan for dealing with the problem, these strategies are also variously know as "repair strategies" or "comprehension strategies". In classifying such strategies, we need to ask whether we are dealing with a problem of expression or a problem of comprehension: this leads to difficulties of description and observation because, since we cannot tell exactly what is going on in people's heads, we can only deduce that comprehension strategies are being applied from clues in the learner's discourse i.e. via expression. Another important point to take into consideration is whether or not the strategy in question involves the cooperation of both participants in the discourse. Finally, it is important to note who initiates the strategy in question and whether there is an appeal for help.

If we take the point of view of the individual faced with a problem, we arrive at a definition of strategy of the following type:

"Communicative strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal."

(Faerch & Kasper, 1983)

Many linguists, though, are worried by the subjective quality of such definitions - clearly brought out in the vagueness of expressions such as "potentially conscious" - which give rise to considerable methodological difficulties. How do we know that a strategy is being applied - and what strategy? This is why other linguists prefer to limit the term strategy to those cases where there is a clearly observable collaboration between the parties in the discourse:

"The term relates to a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. (Meaning structures include both linguistic and sociolinguistic structures). Necessary criteria:

1) A speaker desires to communicate meaning X to a listener.

2) The speaker believes the linguistic or sociolinguistic structure de-

sired to communicative meaning X is unavailable or is not shared with the listener.

Thus

3) The speaker chooses to
   a) Avoid - not attempt to communicate meaning X, or
   b) To attempt alternate means to communicate meaning X. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning."

(Tarone, 1980)

It is this second definition which underlies the brief discussion and classification of communication strategies which follows. Remember, though, that we are still dealing with the negotiation of meaning: communication strategies are those plans we follow when, in interactive discourse, we come up against a conscious problem of some kind. They are cognitive mechanisms for dealing with an imbalance of knowledge. The different strategies represent different ways of trying to restore a balance of knowledge and, therefore, to establish commonground.

II. 2. Some Communicative Strategies

1) Topic avoidance

   The speaker decides not to attempt to say or talk about X, because he does not feel competent to do so. This may be marked explicitly by such expressions as "Let's talk about Y instead".

2) Message abandonment

   Having started an attempt to communicate a message, the speaker gives up because it is too difficult. This may be marked explicitly by such expressions as "I can't say it in English".

To some observers (1) and (2) are not really strategies, since they do not involve solving the problem in question. They do get rid of the problem, though, and so can be included here for the sake of completeness. There are two other main categories:

3) Self-repair strategies

   - where the speaker tries to solve the problem on his own.

4) Collaborative strategies

   - where the speaker tries to recruit the help of his interlocutor.

Note that the speaker may be either the native speaker/teacher or the foreigner/learner, though any particular strategy may be more commonly used by, say, the learner rather than the teacher.

ad. 3) Self Repair Stategies

For the sake of simplicity, we shall exclude from this category

(a) False starts: where speakers immediately correct themselves e.g. "I give gave him the book"

(b) New starts: where speakers correct themselves at the next possible completion point e.g. "I give him a book. I gave him a book"

(c) Rehearsed productions: where the speaker prepares his discourse in advance - by learning it by heart, for example.

(a) and (b) are excluded for purely practical reasons. (c) is excluded because Tarone's 3 (b) above does not apply: it is not really a strategy, since no negotiation is possible.

The self-repair strategies themselves include:

(d) Borrowing or transfer from another language, usually but not necessarily the speaker's mother-tongue e.g.:
"There was a lot of circulation" (for "traffic")
If no attempt is made to make the item conform to the target-language norms of pronunciation etc., we are dealing with language switch.

(e) Literal translation where the speaker takes a term from one language and translates it literally (or "word for word") into another e.g.: ".... it was in a handkerchief".
The equivalent expression in English for "dans un mouchoir" is "neck and neck".

(f) Word coinage where the speaker invents a word, either on the basis of his own language e.g.: saying 'inonded' for flooded, or on the basis of his knowledge of the target language, by making a noun from a verb, for instance, or vice-versa. Taking the noun "embuscade" he forms the verb "embuscader" which though not correct is perfectly comprehensible.

(g) "smurfing" (or "Schtroumpfing" if you prefer!): the speaker uses "empty" or meaningless words to fill gaps in his knowledge, relying on his interlocutor's guessing their meaning from the context.

"Thing" or "truc" are typical examples, but there are many others: "Whatsit", "thingummy", "machine" and so on.

(h) Approximation: the use of a word which the speaker knows not to be correct, but which he hopes will nonetheless convey his message. This may involve
- Under-generalisation: where a low-coverage word is used instead of a high-coverage one e.g. "rose" is used instead of "flower" or "construction" for "building".
- Over-generalisation: where a high-coverage word is used instead of a low coverage one: e.g. "bag" for "handbag".
- Inappropriate words of the same level of generalisation e.g. "lorry" for "van".

(i) Circumlocution: the speaker uses more words than are necessary to convey his message e.g.
"There was some land between the houses that nobody used" (for wasteground")

(j) Description: the speaker describes some aspect of the item to which he wishes to refer (appearance, function, etc.)
"The thing you use when you want to take the cork out of a bottle of wine" (for "cork-screw")

(k) Non-verbal communication: the use of mime, gestures, facial expression, noises, etc. as well as expressive interjections and intonation.

ad. 4) Collaborative Strategies

Here we are dealing with attempts to influence the interlocutor's behaviour in such a way as to solve a problem.

(l) Establishing identity as a foreigner, as someone who has had or will have problems in expression e.g.
"I'm sorry, I'm a foreigner. I only speak a little English. I don't understand."

(m) Appeals
- to speak more slowly, articulate clearly e.g.:
"Could you speak more slowly, please".

- To repeat:
  "Sorry, could you say that again, please"
- To explain or clarify:
  "Sorry, but what does X mean?"
  "I'm sorry, but I don't understand what you mean."

(n) Requests for assistance

- For translation e.g.:
  "How do you say "gentil" in English?"
- For adjudication, evaluation and correction e.g.:
  "Is that right?" "Can you say that in English?" "Which is correct, X or Y?"
- Gambits: where the speaker asks his interlocutor to provide a missing item e.g.:
  "It's one of those ... you know ... I can't find the right word ... what's it called?"

(o) Checks

Having formulated a hypothesis about whether messages have been understood, speakers can test them or check on them.

- Feedback: Speakers provide or request feedback as to whether their own or their interlocutor's messages have been understood: "I know", "I understand"/"Do you understand?" "Know what I mean?".
- Confirmation: Speakers make explicit their interpretations of their interlocutor's meaning or intention e.g.:
  "You mean you want me to ...?"
- Additional information: Speakers provide or request further information in order to test their hypotheses about their interlocutor's meaning or understanding e.g.:
  "Spain - you know?"
  "Where they fight bulls?"
  "Yeah - Spain."

III. 1. Communicative Interference (1)

So far in this article, I have been talking as if speakers always manage to deal satisfactorily with their communicative problems. Unfortu-

nately, this is manifestly not the case. Even when speakers are aware of their problems, they may lack the capacity to deal with them. More importantly, though, they may be unaware that any problem exists and consequently fail to express themselves or to interpret their interlocutor's meaning in a socially appropriate way. This is usually due to their unconsciously employing the sociocultural rules of their mother-tongue and can give rise to a wide range of misunderstandings and *faux pas* ('pragmatic failures') which may vary from the trivial to the catastrophic. When I impose the phonological or syntactic rules of my mother-tongue or another language, people might say that I have an accent or that I don't speak the language very well. But when I impose my mother-tongue social rules, I will be seen as not behaving very well and judged as being rude, stupid or aggressive.

III. 2. Some Examples of Pragmatic Failure

Pragmatic failure occurs when we fail in some way to understand a speaker's full intention in saying something. For some reason, we do not go succesfully from what is said to what is meant. It is, therefore, that umbrella term covering a wide variety of communicative problems which prevent the successful grasping of the contextual meaning of an utterance. Consider the following examples:

Examples:

(i) Teacher: "Mr. A. would you like to read the passage aloud, please?"
Mr. A : "Er ... well, no, thank you very much."
(Mr. A failed to identify the force of the teacher's utterance as a request for action. He thought his personal preferences were being consulted.)

(ii) Native Speaker (American): " ... great to see you again, we really must get together some time and ..."
Foreigner: "When? Tuesday?"
(The foreigner has misunderstood a polite leave-taking formula, attributing it the value of an invitation.)

(iii) Teacher of French to a group of immigrant workers: "Right, I want to know what this is called. What is it ? ... Anyone?

We had it last week. What is it, do you remember? Ali? Bashur? Well, the answer isn't written on the floor, you know ... Anyone?"
(The workers' respect for a teacher is so great that it prevents their answering direct questions which are all taken as being purely rhetorical. Moreover, it would be impolite to meet the gaze of a social superior, so they do not know they are being 'addressed'.)

(iv) A Frenchman invited a Dutchman round for an evening meal. The Dutchman arrived three hours earlier than he was expected.
(Different senses for the 'same' sign).

(v) German tourist to a Lapp: "How many reindeer have you got?"
Lapp stumps off furiously.
(unacceptable topic nomination)

(vi) Teacher (holding door open) "After you ..."
Mme V.: "Pardon."
Teacher (bewildered) "What?"
(selection of wrong politeness formula for this particular conversational routine).

(vii) Very young shop assistant: "There you are dear."
Old lady: "Don't you 'dear' me!"
(failure to agree on relative social positions and consequently, on a mutually acceptable style.)

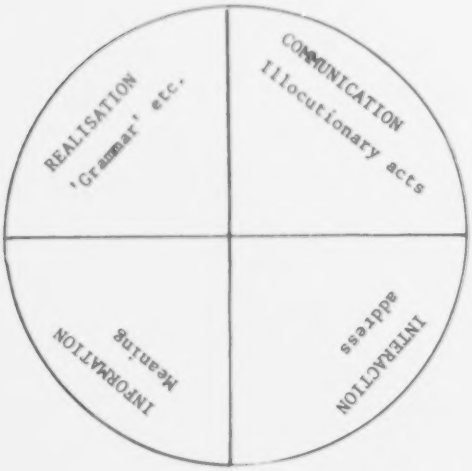
(viii) Parent: "Are those incredibly filthy boots in front of the door in everybody's way yours?"
Son: "Yes" (continues staring at T.V.)
(Deliberate (?) refusal to apply normal inferencing procedures)

(ix) Teacher: "... So what do you think you would do if you were Chairman of the TUC?" (Long silence : after several more attempts it becomes clear to the teacher that the learners do not recognise the acronym.)
"...TUC is short for Trades Union Council."
(Lack of shared knowledge or 'common ground')

III. 3. Categories of Communicative Interference

As the examples above clearly show, communicative interference can occur at many different levels and result in many different kinds of pragmatic failure. It would obviously be useful if teachers had at their disposal some way of identifying the different types of failure. To do this, we first need a model of discourse, a framework which would provide the pigeon-holes into which we could sort the various errors we observe. In very, very rough outline, such a model might look like this:

Strands in the construction of discourse



Realisation

This refers to various elements which can be coded to carry messages. The most important and familiar of these is, of course, the 'grammar' of speech. But we should not forget that there are a number of non-verbal features (such as intonation and voice quality, gesture or facial expression) which can also be conventionally patterned to carry messages.

Communication

Here we study the communicative acts which speakers perform in the course of an interaction. One of the most important dimensions of the meaning of a communicative act is its illocutionary value, such as "inviting" or "refusing", which reflects the speaker's intention on performing that act.

Interaction

Oral discourse involving more than one person is necessarily a collaborative activity. For that collaboration to work smoothly, we need to have a system of mechanisms for the distribution of speaking turns. Our rights to the floor, though, are not purely mechanical; they are based on the system of address, which is itself the most important linguistic manifestation of role.

Information

This refers to the knowledge which participants exchange or negotiate in order to establish the common ground essential to mutual comprehension (see Section I: "The Negotiation of Meaning").

Can the approach to discourse sketched above help us describe and understand different types of pragmatic failure in a cross-cultural setting, such as the language classroom? I believe it can, though clearly much remains to be done. What follows is in no sense a strict taxonomy : rather, it indicates ways in which one might begin collecting evidence of communicative interference i.e. deviations in the use of an L2 which are due to the speaker's imposing his L1 socio-cultural rules.

1) A particular grammatical structure may be common to the learner's L1 and L2. Yet it might realise a function or functions which are not common to both : for example in French, English and Swedish there is a structure 'Si (if, om) + conditional clause'. Observation leads us to the conclusion that the French structure can be used to realise at least three different functions:

   a) Hypothesising.

      "S'il arrive, je le lui dirai."

   b) Requesting for confirmation.

"Si je suis prêt?" (C'est bien ce que tu viens de me demander ?)

c) Suggesting.

"Et si on allait au cinéma ce soir!"

If we turn to colloquial Finnish-Swedish, we find that there too, the 'om and conditional' structure can realise these three functions:

a) "Om han kommer, ska jag berätta det för honom."

b) "Om jag är färdig?" ("Jo, jo!")

c) "Om vi sku' ga pa bio i kväll!"

However, when we turn to English, we find a very different kettle of fish!

a) "If he comes, I'll tell him."

b) *If I am ready?

c) *If we go to the cinema this evening.

Note what the asterisk means here : these perfectly correct grammatical constructions can not (= do not) function as requests for confirmation or suggestions.

This explains cases of complete breakdown, where the learner tries to make a suggestion with 'if' - and the native-speaker simply waits patiently for the utterance to be finished:

Learner: "If we went to the cinema?"

(Long pause)

Native speaker: "What would happen?"

2) As we saw earlier, speakers usually have a number of options for realising any particular speech act. Personal style and personal relationships between the speaker and the learner will, of course, play a major role in determing this choice! However, studies such as those by Olshtain (1981) (2) clearly show that there are also cultural 'preferences'. For example, to apologise for damaging the car you so kindly lent me I can:

a) Make an expression of apology ("I can't tell you how sorry I am")

b) Explain or account for my behaviour ("There was a huge wasp")

c) Acknowledge responsibility ("It was my fault, though")

d) Make an offer of repair ("Of course I'll have it seen to")

e) Make a promise of forbearance ("And it'll never happen again, I swear")

In 'serious' cases, a speaker might avail himself of all these possibilities. But by and large it would seem that different societies privilege different choices. Olshtain says that Hebrew speakers prefer (b) and the fact that they do not actually say "I apologise" makes them sound relatively unapologetic to speakers of English. English speakers, it seems to me, do prefer (a) which, I suspect, makes us sound quite grovelling to speakers of French who favour (b).

At a deeper level, there is also the problem of knowing just what calls for an apology. An expression of admiration, a source of pride in the L1, can be regarded as dishonourable by L2 speakers, for example.

3) Sequences of speech acts ('conversational routines') may vary considerably from language to language and situation to situation. For example, in English and Swedish a compliment is generally followed by thanks, whereas in Thai (Richards, 1983) and French it is played down ("Oh this old thing, I've had it for years"!). As Coulmas (3) has pointed out, all languages are rich in conventional exchanges of this kind. Sometimes, though, the constituent acts vary from language to language, as in the example above - or where apologies are used to express gratitude after an offer : this is apparently the case in Japanese, where English would of course have thanks.

Even where routines are superficially the same, their use may differ considerably. An Irish friend of mine on a recent visit to France was rather disappointed to find that when he replied "Merci" to the offer "Tu prendras un petit cognac?" he had refused it.

Work on discourse processing (such as Grice's Maxim's and Searle's 'Inferencing procedures' and Gordon and Lakoff's 'Conversational postulates') is beginning to throw interesting light on the problem of speech act sequences (amongst other things). But however rich and detailed such studies may be and however universal the rules of natural logic they reveal, it is unlikely that they will provide

direct input for teaching purposes. There are two main reasons for this: the first is the highly idiomatic nature of many routines and sequences from the formal point of view (e.g. "Mais il ne fallait pas!" as an expression of appreciation in French) and the second is the completely culture-bound notion of situation.

Sequences of speech acts will vary according to the situation as culturally defined and perceived by the participants. It is, therefore, possible to find instances of speech acts which occur in one language and not in another. Indeed, it is by no means necessary to look for 'exotic' situations such as initiation ceremonies in Bali or cricket matches in Yorkshire to find speech acts which have no translation equivalent ("Howzat?"). For example, there is no routine in English which corresponds to the French 'Bon appétit' or Finnish 'Hyvää ruokahaluaa'.

An important aspect of speech act sequencing is simple repetition : how many times should an offer be repeated ("Do have some more cabbage") to be seen as sincere -and after how many repetitions does it become impolite? In England my impression is that the limit is as low as two ("Are you sure you won't have any more cabbage?"). On the other hand, when I dine with Syrian friends, I always overeat because after the fifth, sixth, seventh time they offer ("But this is your chicken breast") I run out of ways of refusing politely. Similarly, in Finland a host or hostess will expect to call guests to the table at least three times : such a delay would be regarded as positively rude in France. Moreover, the hosts would expect to be thanked by the guests on the occasion of their next meeting, even if this were to take place several months later using formulas for which there would be no real translation equivalent in many other languages ("Kiitos viimesestä", "Tack för Senast").

Finally, it is important to note that a difference in the order of a sequence of speech acts may also reflect a considerable difference in social values and priorities. To take just one example :

last year the Secretary of State for Industry, Sir Keith Joseph at the time, visited Japan for important negotiations. At the beginning of the meeting both the British and Japanese teams arrived on time, but then had to wait while the interpreters went into what seemed an interminable huddle. In the end, the British sent someone to ask what it was all about and were told that the interpreters were introducing themselves to one another and filling one another in on their family backgrounds and so on. What would have been regarded as a topic of coffee-break conversation in Europe was seen by them as a necessary condition to successful social interaction.

4) Information

The most obvious and indeed the most common source of pragmatic failure is lack of shared information or common knowledge. We have to be more explicit with people we don't know because we don't know what they don't know. This is particularly true in dealing with a second language situation where interactants do not necessarily even share the same knowledge of the language. Hence the intense interest in interpretive strategies and the negotiation of meaning at present (4). These strategies can be seen as attempts to deal with potential or actual pragmatic breakdown, due to the inadequacy of a speaker's linguistic means relative to his communicative intention.

Topic nomination is central to the information of discourse as here understood. But it should not be thought of simply in static terms: in such and such a society topic X is taboo. This disguises the way in which we select topics according to the social roles and categories we attribute to our interlocutors (which is a function of our knowledge of them). Where our knowledge is limited, we play it safe. We nominate topics like the weather which cannot possibly cause offense : mind you, have you tried telling a farmer what a lovely summer we had last year? The point is not a trivial one : every social group has its sore points, which means that acceptable topics vary enormously, so that what is 'safe' here is 'sore' there. Even topics which are regarded as safe enough to be used as opening formulae in some societies may be regarded as too personal in others :

European: "How do you do?"
Asian : "Are you married?"

(Artificial example)

Similarly, work on specific types of discourse, such as telephone calls has shown that the topic (e.g. identifying oneself) may vary from culture to culture. In England, even private individuals often answer the phone with their name and number : in France this is almost unheard of.

Last year, the research centre where I work (C.R.A.P.E.L.) was honoured by the visit of a group of lecturers and university administrators from the Asian Peoples' Republic. Two members of this group who were especially interested in the teaching of English asked if they could sit in on any of the evening classes for adults ("formation permanente") which we run, and of course I was happy to arrange this for them.

The teacher in question asked the visitors if they would like to be introduced to the members of the class - a mixed group of eight professional and commercial people. No, absolutely not, they just wanted to observe - which they proceeded to do for the two hours the class lasted. At the end of the period, the teacher, who had been feeling somewhat awkward with these two voluntarily anonymus orientals following her every move, tried once more to bring them in. Would they like to ask the learners any questions about the course, its contents, methodology and so on?

Yes, they did have just one question, they replied. They then went round the whole group asking each learner the same question: "How old are you?"

As you can imagine, everyone was slightly taken aback. One of the ladies present - a very elegant doctor "d'un certain age" tried to fob them off. Oh là là, she was very old. "Yes, of course you are, madam", came the reply.

Now we can exclude the possibility that this was some kind of statistical survey - that sort of information was already available to them

in a far more detailed way and for far greater numbers of people. And even if it hadn't been, you just can't go round asking people point-blank how old they are. At least, not middle-aged French ladies you can't.

Why not?

At the risk of seeming facetious, I would suggest that this question, i.e. questions of this type, are amongst the most important which the discourse analyst can ask if he wishes to get below the formal surface of the discourse and start investigating it as a process of negotiation constrained by its own specific socio-cultural rules. Moreover, if we are lucky, it is possible to see those rules as the realisation or operation of a society's structures and values. Discourse is society in motion. In the case we are discussing, for example, it is quite possible we are dealing with a case where the rules of topic nomination have been breached. In any given society, as we all know, there are things we can and cannot talk about, especially when we meet someone for the first time. Small talk comes in different sizes.

Now of course topic nomination is, in itself, of considerable interest to the discourse analyst. However we label it - "subject", "topic", "theme", "propositional content" - what we are talking about is a major influence on the type of discourse we produce, and in particular on its information structure. But the point which I am trying to make here is that, if we leave things there, if we are content simply to draw up a list of socially appropriate and inappropriate topics, we will have a description of the problem, but no explanation of it. We will know what you can and can't talk about but not why. We will be dealing with what Chomsky very disparagingly calls "natural history" by which I take him to mean precisely the establishment of descriptive taxonomies which have no explanatory power. In very general terms, he holds that discourse analysis, and work in the field of pragmatics as a whole, simply does not have the conceptual and methodological tools available to make explanatory as opposed to "merely" descriptive statements. In the sense that syntactic models are far more sop-

histicated, detailed and precise than anything discourse analysts have to offer at present, Chomsky is right, as one would expect. Discourse analysis (DA) has a history of about 30 years maximum: syntactic studies date b ack to at least Aristotle. But this does not mean that the problems of DA are either uninteresting or insoluble.

If DA is to have any explanatory power, we need to be able to formulate hypotheses about why, in the case in question, our Korean's behaviour was what it was. Why, for him, was it definitely socially acceptable and appropriate to ask a middle aged woman her age - but most definitely not for her? Can we suggest any explanation for these discourse rules in terms of underlying cultural structures and values? Well of course we can, or I wouldn't have chosen this particular example and it is one which has probably occurred to you, namely that in many oriental and Asian societies , increasing age is valued, it is a social attribute which implies knowledge and confers status. In other words, this particular scale of values is the very opposite of what we generally find in the Western Society.

Once we know this, or rather, once we take it into account, the Korean visitor's behaviour "makes sense". We see it as the behaviour of a rational, if mistaken, man. There is an extremely important lesson to be learned here for the discourse analyst. It is that rationality is a cultural variable. For the moment I would just like to emphasise the extremely relativistic nature of the concept of "socially appropriate behaviour" (or "sanity", if you prefer). In some societies it makes sense to examine a chicken's entrails in detail before deciding to go to war, invest money or choose a new wife. In others it does not. If we discovered a stock-market analyst in his City of London office picking at a chicken's giblets on his desk, we would probably judge him to be insane, or at least inefficient. But we must beware of applying the same criteria to a different society and a different situation. Above all, we must beware of cross-cultural value judgements: who are we to say that we are more civilised than the ancient Romans?

A further point worth noting is that the rule for topic nomination that

we have postulated - that age is not a suitable subject - is susceptible to considerable refinement. Moreover, that refinement is itself expressed in terms of social structures or rather by cross-referencing with other sets of categories, such as the age and sex of the interlocutor. It is obviously no offence to ask someone who is obviously young what their age is: we do it all the time with small children. And it is in some sense worse to ask a woman her age than it is to ask a man. I apologise if I seem to be sanctioning sexist stereotypes here: I quite appreciate that there is a growing resentment amongst women about the way they are written off socially at the appearance of their first grey hairs whilst their husbands are allowed to go bald, wrinkled and pot-bellied with no loss of prestige. But the point is that we are looking at stereotypes, at the unconscious values and categories which discourse articulates. And it is precisely because these values or attitudes are what they are, and are by definition generally accepted, part of "common sense", that women have something to object to.

But, questions of natural justice apart, from the discourse analyst's point of view it makes good technical sense to correlate such fundamental social categories and the value-systems associated with them with various parameters of discourse, since it enables the analyst to go beyond "mere" description towards a more explanatory model.

With these important implications in mind, let us now go back to our point of departure, topic nomination, for a more general consideration of its functions in discourse. The danger is one of not being able to see the wood for the trees. When you are working at the nitty-gritty level of DA, you cannot forever be breaking off to give solemn disquisitions about underlying social structures: on the other hand, the minute you lose sight of such matters, you rob your work of most of its value.

Constraints on what forms an appropriate topic for a given conversation in a given society are of many different kinds:

a) Topic Exclusion

Certain topics may be excluded since their very selection would imply, within that particular society's system of values, that the speaker had a low opinion of his or her interlocutor. The lady doctor in the example we have been discussing felt that to give an accurate reply to the Asian visitor's question would have placed her in an inferior position. This was "true" for her, and for anyone sharing her system of values; but this did not include the visitor which is precisely why he felt able to ask the question. Clearly, we are touching here on the rules of politeness whose aim is to regulate behaviour in such a way as to protect both speakers and hearers from any untoward effects resulting from their interaction.

For many people, income is an excluded topic. This, at least, is the only conclusion I can draw from the number of French people who have mentioned indignantly to me that U.S. Americans have asked them how much they earn.

Of course, one of the major expressions of the values of a society is its religious institutions. So it is not surprising to find that religious taboos invariably give rise to discourse taboo i.e. topics which cannot normally be brought up in conversation. Sometimes these are very general indeed, as when any reference to the future is discouraged. I myself was brought up in a strictly religious atmosphere, but as a London teenager, I wanted to discuss current moral issues. Like most teenagers, I equated "morality" with "sex", but found it totally impossible to have any kind of conversation on topics of this kind - abortion, birth-control, divorce, etc. with my parents, or indeed with any adult member of my family. I honestly believe that they were incapable of talking about these matters: they had never acquired the relevant concepts simply because discourse on these topics was not allowed, it was "talking dirty". From the purely institutional point of view, this is a very satisfactory state of affairs: such cultural values cannot be challenged if they cannot be talked about. They quite literally cannot be called into question.

A well-known example of topic exclusion is the fact that one should not refer to an Arab's possessions, above all in an admiring way, since he will feel honour-bound to give them to you. Again, top British and American businessmen going to Japan are warned not to talk about the very products of services they have come to sell and above all never to praise them. This, along with all discussion of money matters, should be left to junior staff on both sides.

Within cultures, there will be a natural tendency for different topics to be excluded according to variations in sub-group, setting and situation: young officers in the British army were expected to avoid any reference to politics, women (i.e. named individuals) and religion whilst they were in their Mess. The idea was, of course, to avoid anything that might give rise to discussion, solidarity being the major value.

b) Constraints on Opening Topics (or formulae)

A German colleague reports that for a long time he had the impression that all Englishmen were simple-minded, because of their incessant inane blathering about the weather. Certain topics which can be nominated in ordinary conversation are subject to restrictions as regards their position of occurrence. In some cases (as with the weather in English) they will be favoured as opening formulae, presumably because they are regarded as "safe". In other cases, perfectly acceptable topics (in a given society) are felt to be inappropriate as openers. For example, Asians will often ask "Are you married?" early in a conversation : when I say "early" here, I am being ethnocentric - what I really mean is "earlier than my British-English rules of discourse would allow".

Similarly, Loveday (1982) points out that the sharply-defined hierarchical values of the Japanese mean that they feel the need to situate their interlocutors socially before an interaction can begin:

"When meeting foreigners, Japanese transfer their L1 over-differentiated system of social hierarchy, introducing themselves, for instance, as "I belong to Mitsubishi Bank" and immediately asking seemingly offensive questions to Westerners because of their conversational sequencing such as "What is your job?" "How old are you?" and "What is the name of your company?"

Suitable topics for opening conversation may include the weather, as in English, but also one's interlocutor's health, requests for local or family news and the state of the roads.

c) Constraints on Topic Nomination related to the Identity of the Interlocutor

Many topics can or cannot be touched on in conversation only with certain individuals or categories of person. Such decisions will usually be directly related to a speaker's perception of this interlocutor's social identity or group membership, i.e. it will be a reflection of what we know about them and of what we think they know about us. We do not have the same topics of conversation for our encounters with a doctor, a gynaecologist, our children's teachers, a car mechanic, a child, the captain of our sports team, etc. Similarly, we learn not to nominate topics which we know our interlocutor cannot handle, for lack of knowledge, or which simply go beyond what are regarded as reasonable topics or questions, "Why are bananas yellow?" "Why do people grow old?"

It is no concidence that such questions are typical children's questions, since the child is actually engaged in the process of establishing just what reasonable questions are and to whom the various categories into which they fall can be addressed. He is writing his social encyclopedia.

Sometimes the appropriateness of a topic will be related to our interlocutor's individual identity, his personality, as opposed to his membership of a social group. In his book on "One Upmanship", Stephen Potter points out that one of the best ways of embarrassing someone who has just told you a story about a man with a wooden leg is to roar with laughter, slap your thigh - and then to limp off rather sadly with your own leg as stiff as a plank. Because he lacked the relevant knowledge about you, he has nominated a topic - wooden legs - which is inappropriate since it threatens your face by ridiculing a social category to which you belong.

Putting it another way, "On ne parle pas de corde dans la maison d'un pendu". We have to try to avoid stepping on people's corns.

5) Interaction

In any situation, discursive rights and duties are distributed according to the participants' perception of their roles, and in accordance with social values as expressed in the rules of address. Such rights and duties are very rarely equally distributed : for almost any role relationship (customer-shop assistant, parent-child, doctor-patient, teacher-learner) there are clear differences as to who can initiate and close exchanges, for example. They are often the subject of 'proverbial' expressions ("little boys should be seen and not heard") and of explicit instructions : "What do you plead?", "Don't answer back" and so on.

However, both roles and status vary from society to society. Consequently, the type of interaction in terms of rights to speak, vary too. To take extreme, but common examples, the role 'soldier' and 'policeman' are usually a direct reflection of the nature of the State in question. You can chide a group of young French conscripts for making a nuisance of themselves on a train : this would be highly inadvisable in certain countries.

Pragmatic failure, at the level of interaction and address can be generally discussed under headings :

a) Failure to take the initiative

There are occasions, for example, where one is expected to greet (introduce, etc.) in one culture but not in another. In France, for example, successive arrivals in a shop queue greet all earlier arrivals ("Bonjour Messieurs-Dames! ") whether they know them or not. So do Germans boarding trains. In England, such behaviour would be regarded as eccentric.

Who makes the first move when it is time for guests to leave? In England, it is usually the guests themselves ("Look at the time! We really must be getting along."). But this is not universal especially in cases where perceived differences in status are very wide.

b) Illicitly taking the initiative

This is 'revolutionary discourse', since it will always imply a con-

frontation between the different participants' perceptions of their relative roles and status. Reactions will therefore often be out of all proportion : "Who do you think you are!" "Who asked you?" "Cheek!", "Mind your own business!" "Shut up!" "Speak when you're spoken to and not till then!" This is particularly dangerous, because for many people the dyad native speaker/foreigner is itself enough to give the privilege of taking the initiative to the native speaker alone. The foreigner is no more expected to strike up a conversation in a pub (despite what certain 'communicative courses' might say) than a learner is expected to start the lesson ("Right, everybody, open your books at p. 92").

c) Failure to reply

Example (iii) on page 57 is a good illustration of how communication breaks down due to failure of address. The addressee that is, does not know that he is expected to reply or is unable to do so. Invariably, this is ascribed to an unwillingness to do so and is often at the root of racist stereotypes. ("They're so shifty/lazy" etc.).

d) Interruptions (illicit replies)

Speaking 'out of turn' is a major source of pragmatic error. We can distinguish several types of interruption, which are listed below in order of increasing gravity:

(i) A addresses B. B replies before A finishes ('In turn interruption')
(ii) A addresses B. C replies to A
(iii) A addresses B. C replies to B
(iv) A addresses B. C replies to D

Amongst the main causes of interruption are: a failure to appreciate the formality or key of an interaction; insufficient mastery of the turn-taking mechnism; and ignorance of the discursive rights of particular roles. Much of this can be related to recent work on politeness phenomena (5) and face (6). Time and space do not permit me to discuss these matters here, but they are obviously of great importance, as is pragmatic failure in non-verbal communication which I have discussed in some detail elsewhere (7) and which I shall very

briefly refer to under 6) below.

e) Illicit performance of closing acts

The rights to terminate an exchange or interaction are amongst the most clearly defined of all, since they confer so much discourse control. It is the interviewer's right (... the parent's, the boss's) to 'have the last word'. Any other user is challenging these roles if he usurps those rights. The doctor, not the patient, says when the visit is over. The teacher, not the learner, decides when an exhange is finished. This is illustrated in the analysis of classroom language in Appendix A.

f) Failure to recognise closing acts

Social skills trainers in the early 1970's found that a common reason for their students' lack of success in interviews was that "You just can't get rid of them'. Signalling the end of an interaction -or even an exchange- can be a delicate matter, involving the use of preparatory formulae ("Well, I think that about wraps it up". "I'll see what I can do"), intonation (8) and kinesics. The complexity and variety of these adumbratory signals is, however, related to their social importance. But, pragmatic breakdown of this type may not simply be a matter of failure to recognise signals : it may be the expression of deeper misunderstandings related to role or to the nature and extent of the event in question.

6) Non-Verbal Communication (NVC)

This is not, of course, a discourse category "in its own right". NVC may be used to realise communicative acts, as when we beckon to someone to call them into our office or put our hand over a glass to refuse more wine: moreover, much modalisation in face-to face interaction is carried out non-verbally via facial expression and posture. We have also seen that turn-taking in interaction is largely realised non-verbally and clearly much of the information we gather about other people, and on which we base our perception of them and our consequent behaviour, is non-verbal: uniforms, grey hair, jewellery, colour, etc.

Here, then, we will do little more than remind ourselves of the communicative variety and importance of NVC and of its richness as a source of communicative interference, largely because it is so often completely unconscious.

Examples:

- Do not pat and Arab child, or, indeed, a child from any Muslim country on the head. Far from being regarded as a sign of affection it will be interpreted as an insult to his or her spiritual powers. Neither should you show the soles of your shoes to an Arab, or offer him anything with your left hand.
- Do not maintain prolonged eye-contact with a Japanese, it is regarded as impolite: look at his neck.
- Do not give the V-sign in England with the back of your hand towards your interlocutor. It is obscene.

Notes:

(1) Recent articles on this topic include:
Riley, P. (1981) "Towards a constrastive pragmalinguistics" in Fisiak, J.:Contrastive Linguistics and the Language Teacher, Pergamon.
Thomas, J. (1983) "Cross-cultural pragmatic failure", Applied Linguistics, Vol. 4, no. 2.
Richards, J. and Sukiwat, M. (1983) 'Language transfer and conversational competence' Applied Linguistics, Vol. 4, no.2.
Loveday, L. (1982) 'Communicative interference : a framework for contrastively analysing L2 communicative competence...' IRAL, Vol XX/1.
All these articles include good bibliographies.

(2) Olshtain, E. (1981) 'Sociocultural competence and language transfer : the case of apology'. Paper presented at the conference on language transfer. Ann Arbor, Michigan.

(3) Coulmas, F. (1981) Conversational Routine, The Hague, Mouton.

(4) See Faerch, C. and Kasper, G. (1983) Interpretive strategies, Longman.

(5) Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1978) "Universals in language usage po-

liteness phenomena". In Goody, E.N., Questions and politeness; Strategies in social interaction, CUP.

(6) Goffman, E. (1971), Relations in public, Harmondsworth, Penguin.

(7) Riley, P. (1981), "Viewing Comprehension : l'oeil écoute" in The teaching of listening comprehension, ELT Documents Special, London, The British Council.

(8) Cf. Brazil, D. Coulthard, M., Johns, C. (1981), Discourse intonation and language teaching, Longman.

In the Following two Appendixes activities are described for developing communicative strategies (A) and for teaching/learning cultural competence (B).

Appendix A

Activities for developing communicative strategies

General requirements

1) Such activities must be interactive, though this does not preclude phases of sensitisation and preparation.
2) There will be some unshared information which the learner wishes to communicate or obtain. Learners will have alternatives as to how they go about this task (i.e. the nature of the activity or materials will not improve one particular course of action).
3) There must be some element of doubt as to the final outcome.

These requirements apply to all communicative activities - games, role-play simulations etc. The degree to which they elicit and practice strategies has more to do with the participants and their knowledge (of one another, the topic and the language) than with the nature of the activity. However, activities whose main purpose is information - sharing of some kind will obviously tend to encourage the use of strategies: these include quizzes, problem-solving, jigsaw listening, explanations, etc. Here are five such activities which aim at developing different aspects of the learner's strategic competence:

(1) Utterance-linking (Sensitisation)
Two apparently unrelated sentences are produced and learners are asked to invent situations in which they might have occurred together. (Can be carried out in the mother-tongue if wished).

(2) "Talking about talking". (Preparation and practice)
The learner is provided with the "raw material" for operating strategies. These will include set phrases such as:
"I'm sorry, I didn't understand what you said"
"Sorry, but could you repeat that please?"
"What does x mean?"
"I don't know what an x is, I'm afraid"
"Could you speak more slowly please, I'm a foreigner"
"How do you say y in English?"

"It's a sort of .....you know.....a thing for....a whatsit...."
"How do you say that in English? Is that right?"
"Should I say A or B in English?" etc. etc.

(3) What's new? One learner in each pair or group is provided with a written description and explanation of a new invention or product. The others only have a picture. The task is to share the information concerning the nature and functioning of the object in question. We have found the "new products" featured in "Newsweek" magazine to be excellent for this.

(4) Explain yourself! The learner is placed in an unlikely situation and asked to talk his/her way out of it. The very improbability of the situation usually guarantees numerous requests for clarification and a correspondingly detailed transfer of information. Possible examples: What were you doing in the supermarket pushing a trolley with dozens of packets of milk in it?
Why were you seen throwing stones at a bus in the High Street yesterday?
On Saturday evening you invited your friends for Sunday lunch. When they arrived, you were watching TV and there was nothing to eat or drink.

(5) Paraphrasing. Learners are given a word (in a dictionary, on a slip of paper etc.) which they have to explain in any way they wish that does not involve actually using the word in question. A variation on this is the learner tries to get the rest of the group to say the word by asking questions designed at eliciting it.

Appendix B

Activities for teaching/learning cultural competence

1. "Traditional" Activities

(a) Visits and exchanges (C.B.E.V.E., Fam hols, CNRS etc.).

(b) Pen friends: "cassette friends".

(c) Authentic documents:

written: newspapers, literature, technical documents, travel brochures, mail-order catalogues, etc.

sound: records, tapes, cassettes, radio.

visual: video, films, slides, posters.

(d) Projects, exposés.

(e) Academic study: history, geography, language, institutions.

(f) Show and tell sessions.

(g) "Bilingual" education (i.e. another subject, such as history or computer programming, conducted in L2).

(h) "Visitors" (non-teacher native speakers invited to class, out for a meal, etc.).

(i) Classroom debates and discussions: "brainstorming".

2. "Analytic" procedures

(a) "Discourse analysis": an extract from a sound or video recording is taken for discussion in terms of the intentions, attitudes, meanings and constructs of the participants. Learners are encouraged to identify and label speech functions, to describe attitudes, emotions and modalisations (politeness, certainty, irony) and meanings and beliefs.

(b) "Comparative analysis": different cultural views on the same topic are juxtaposed in some way: e.g. two separate recordings or articles, or a single recording with participants of different nationalities.

(A brief example will be demonstrated).

3. "Personal Construct" activities. (With acknowledgements to Claire Kramsch, MIT)

(a) Sensitisation

(i) Students construe in the foreign language. They take, for example, a list of characteristics ("a loud person", "private", "successful", "free", "respectful") or national holidays and customs, and use them to build up a series of constrasts as they relate either to their own or to the foreign culture. They then compare their lists and write up main points on the board.

Each tries to find a superordinate construct for his own line of thought as well as a bridge to the lines of thought of other students in the class.

(ii) Repertory grids

An experiment/demonstration will be included in the seminar.

(b) Practice and acquisition

(i) Brainstorming

This can include discussions of cases of communicative failure especially those where the learners were personally involved.

(ii) Exercises in dichotomous thinking

Starting out from an observable difference between the two cultures (which need not itself be of any great importance) learners build up lists of constructs and brainstorm on their "range of convenience".

Examples: Closed v.open office doors, handshake/no handshake, short lunch break/long lunch break, educational systems etc. Use is made of analogy and synonyms, constrast and autonyms to build up the list and to abstract superordinate categories. (A description and report on an experiment will be given).

(iii) Defence activities

Learners take the foreigner's part or point of view in discussions and debates, trying to explain "their" outlook to their fellow learners.

Role-play: examples

You are a French EEC administrator in England. Knowing what you know about the English and in particular the way they feel about the liberty of the individual, how would you argue in favour of one of the following:

- the introduction of identity cards in G.B.
- a European currency
- arming the police

You are an English salesman in France. Knowing what you know about France and the French, and in particular their loyalty

to home-produced goods, how would you compose a sales pitch for one of the following British products:

- English wine and cheese
- cars
- perfume
- computers

You have just been offered a position as a teacher of French in G.B./U.S.A. Amongst your teaching duties you have to give short introductory courses on one of the following:

- French history
- French institutions
- life in modern France
- the French national character

What aspects of your chosen topic would you choose to emphasise in order to help your students to understand better present-day French people?

Describe your daily routine to a foreigner whose native country you are familiar with. Knowing what you do about his/her country, what aspects will you emphasise or explain, and why?

Shifting your point of view: examples

Choose a small present for your foreign friend, who has asked for "something really French". Now explain in detail the reasons for your choice. Then reverse roles.

Send your friend a postcard. On it, explain why you made that particular choice. Reverse roles.

Draw up a list describing the characteristics of a national stereotype e.g. The typical Englishman

- wears a bowler hat, rolled umbrella
- has a perfect lawn
- drinks tea at 5 pm
- is hypocritical and nationalistic
- has a stiff upper lip

- is very keen on tradition
- is fond of animals, charitable
- is not too bright
- belongs to clubs and societies etc....

Now put yourself in the position of an Englishman who does not accept some or all of these propositions.

Using tourist brochures, slides etc., explain to the other learners in your group
- the image of your country your government wishes to give to people abroad
- what aspects of life in your country have been omitted.

Then reverse roles.
(Textbooks and guides for foreign visitors will also do - see example below).

Meals

Eating in France

Lunch and dinner are important times for the French and where possible they like to eat a leisurely meal with their family or friends. France is proud of its *haute cuisine* (high quality cooking) and there is a great variety of dishes *(plats)* with most regions having their own specialities.

Meals in France are not quite the same as here and the times of meals are a little different too, particularly for the evening meal.
The French usually eat a light breakfast, a good lunch at midday and the family generally have dinner together in the evening. This gives them an opportunity to eat and talk *en famille*, expecially if the children eat *à la cantine* in school and if the parents are working.

Le petit déjeuner (breakfast) usually consists of a cup or bowl of white coffee (*du café au lait*), or tea *(du thé)*, or drinking chocolate *(du chocolat)* with perhaps a few slices of French bread with butter and jam *(des tartines)*. Irish hotels call this a continental

breakfast. Sometimes for a treat they have *croissants* fresh from the *boulangerie* (baker's). Breakfast is an early meal as school often starts at 8 o'clock or 8.30 at the latest.

Le déjeuner (lunch) generally consists of an *hors d'oeuvre* (starter), for example, *crudités, carottes râpées, tomates, sardines à l'huile, pâté, charcuterie,* then meat or fish and vegetables, cheese or dessert (or both) followed by coffee. It is served from midday. Sometimes, of course, people are so busy that they only have *un sandwich.*

Le dîner (evening dinner) is a family meal which is had anytime from 7 o'clock. There is usually *potage* (soup) perhaps an *hors d'oeuvre,* then meat or fish and vegetables (which some people prefer to eat after the main course rather than with it), *une salade verte* (lettuce with French dressing), cheese and dessert.

Bread is served with lunch and dinner *(a baguette* cut into slices) which is useful for soaking up tasty gravy. Potatoes are a popular vegetable but are not served with every meal.

Les boissons (drinks): France is famous for its wines, but its *eau minérale* (mineral water) is also popular and many people drink it with their meals.

Le goûter: young French people eat a light snack called *le goûter* in the afternoon. It often consists of a piece of bread with chocolate, or a *pain au chocolat* (a pastry with chocolate). Younger children are particularly fond of a *chausson aux pommes* (a pastry with stewed apple in it).

Greetings

Meet the French

In France people have a special way of greeting one another. They always shake hands or kiss each other on both cheeks on meeting for the first time that day and also when saying goodbye. It is customary to shake hands when meeting someone you don't know very well, or a casual

friend. If people are good friends they usually kiss each other on both cheeks - the number of times depends on the people and on the region.

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The Communicative Approach to Foreign Language Teaching.

The Teacher's Case.

THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING. THE TEACHER'S CASE

Dora Dolle & Gerard M. Willems

Introduction

"Whether or not a course is communicative will depend as much on its methodology as on the pedigree of its syllabus" says Keith Johnson in his Communicative Syllabus Design & Methodology (p. 106) and we quite agree with him. We would like to add, however, that this conviction entails a host of personal and professional implications for the foreign language teacher which cannot simply be grouped under the heading 'methodological know-how'.

In traditional, structurally-oriented, foreign language teaching the subject matter to be taught is usually given such priority that the methodology has been mainly geared to avoidance of errors i.e.

to excluding, as much as possible, opportunities for the learner to "go wrong" in using the language. Knowledge about language form is much more important than the ability to use language meaningfully i.e. functionally. This goes for learner and teacher alike and thus interaction processes in the foreign language between teacher and learner and between learners are not generally viewed as supportive of or even essential to the learning process.

In communicative foreign language teaching, however, with its stress on developing the learner's capacity to negotiate meaning in the foreign language, these interaction processes obviously become much more vital. They reinforce motivation in the learner to use the foreign language for real communication and help him to acquire it as a means of communication in addition to his first language.

The above consideration makes heavy demands on the teacher's personal and professional qualities and competencies. For his (!) teaching to be effective the teacher is not only dependent on his knowledge of and experiences with methodologies that are conducive to the development of the learner's communicative competence: he needs to know about the results of research in the field of language acquisition and needs to be able to decide what methodology is suited to what learning process (Competence in the Theory of Learning); he needs insight into and training in directing learning processes and in creating a suitable classroom climate (Pedagogical competence), and, finally, he needs a modicum of self-knowledge and the ability to reflect on his functioning in the classroom (Psychological competence). Education, at all times, depends on interaction between teacher and learner. And, of course, this is especially true of communicative foreign language teaching. Therefore, the teacher's attitude to and insight into his role in interaction processes are of vital importance. Possession of the above competencies is a prerequisite for a language teacher's success in acquiring such an attitude and insight.

In interaction processes it is not only what we say, our verbal behaviour, but also what we communicate paralinguistically, through 'body-

language' or, generally speaking, non-verbally, that is at least as important for the communication. The acknowledgement of the vital role of both verbal and non-verbal behaviour in the interaction which is so necessary in the foreign language class, has implications for the teacher and his professional (re)training. These implications will be discussed below in terms of the teacher's self-presentation, his non-verbal behaviour and his interactive skills. By way of conclusion a description will be given of a well-tried and successful training method meant to help the teacher become aware of his (non)-verbal behaviour and its effects on others. This training method is intended at the same time to help him develop new types of behaviour and acquire new socio-interactive and didactic skills that are prerequisites for the creation of educationally useful classroom interaction.

Interaction

1. Preamble

It is now a commonplace in communicative foreign language teaching to say that a teacher needs to be able to create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to real communication. This involves there being an absence of penalties on errors through marking and the creation of a feeling in the learner that his personality and what he has to say is accepted. It thus also involves the learner's feeling free to experiment with the language (2). He should feel motivated to contribute to the learning process in the class even to the point of literally bringing in teaching material. He should be made to feel open to new experiences and open to the foreign medium as something he may use to express himself emotionally (3). He should not be made to feel constrained by the unmanageability of the tasks he is set (Dolle, Menting & Willems, 1983).

For the teacher all this means that he will have to acquaint himself with what makes each individual learner "tick", with his thoughts, emotions and behaviour. In addition he also needs to be able to show his learners what makes him "tick" himself. By their personal participation teachers can stimulate the interaction in the classroom that is

the very life-blood of communicative foreign language teaching. If a foreign language teacher is unwilling to invest himself in real communication with his learners he can never hope to be a successful "communicative" teacher.

A teacher, often unwittingly, emits verbal and non-verbal signals that are often decisive for the success of his "communicative" class. He will have to be (made) aware that he does so and will have to be trained to become aware especially of his non-verbal behaviour. He will have to be enabled to find out what sort of behaviour inspires his learners or frustrates and blocks them (4). He will need to correlate his verbal and non-verbal behaviour and to avoid presenting himself for instance as feeling (tensely) safe behind his desk on the dais while professing to his pupils that they need to be free, relaxed and, above all, quite themselves.

A teacher also needs training in observing pupils, in listening to them encouragingly, empathetically and also in keeping his mouth shut at the right moments, thus offering his learners the necessary lee-way.

2. Self-presentation

Non-verbal messages may be a considerable help to the teacher in clarifying his thoughts and emotions and they may support or, on the contrary, contradict what he says. Non-verbal signals may also stimulate the interaction process in the classroom. If a teacher is vivacious and mobile and if he shows non-verbally that he enjoys cooperating with his pupils he will undoubtedly stimulate interaction.
At the same time the teacher will show signs of disappointment, uncertainty, irritation or objection non-verbally. It is hard to hide these emotions so it is better that they should be voiced, thereby stimulating the thoughts and emotions of both teacher and pupils, which in turn may lead to mutual understanding.

It is important for the teacher to be aware of his own non-verbal signals, on the one hand to prevent them from confusing or even threatening his pupils, on the other to use them as a positive support of

the interaction that is so necessary especially in a foreign language class. Training in the use of non-verbal behaviour to avoid its negative and stimulate its positive influence on interaction, can be given to the student with the help of video and through feedback from his fellow-students and/or supervisors.

Argyle (1975) mentions a few aspects of self-presentation. It may take place verbally and non-verbally. The non-verbal signals appear to be much more decisive than the verbal, but both are of primary importance as pupils will learn better and show the desired development if they have confidence in the teacher who, in interaction with his pupils, leaves no doubt as to who he is and where he stands. In the initial stages a teacher can present himself verbally by giving information about himself, giving his opinion and voicing his feelings. Interaction is, of course, also stimulated if, conversely, the teacher shows a certain amount of interest in his pupils. If they only experience their teacher as a matter-of-fact specialist in the foreign language, it will be rather difficult for them to muster understanding and feeling for him as a human being and to show these in certain situations. Student reactions are like a mirror in which a teacher can see how successful he is. He will be out to project on to his pupils the image that he has of himself as a skilled professional. If he notices that his pupils obviously do not see eye-to-eye with him on that score he should work more consciously on his self-presentation. As stated above, trying to reduce the disparity between the self-image that is reflected back to him by his pupils and the ideal image that he may strive after, is the best way to set about this.

2.1. Non-verbal behaviour

According to Grell (1976) classroom-teaching takes place through interaction and communication between teacher and pupils. Non-verbal behaviour plays an enormously important role in this interaction. Knapp (1972) says: "The classroom is a veritable goldmine of non-verbal behaviour, which has been relatively untapped by scientific probes." Why should it be so important, above all in the foreign language class

whose aim is the development of communicative competence? Grell (1976) enumerates a number of reasons for the importance of non-verbal behaviour for teaching in general, which we have adapted to the communicative teaching of a foreign language:

a. In communication between human beings non-verbal signals appear to be much more decisive than verbal ones. Facial expression and "body language" appear to be much more eloquent than the spoken word. As stated under 2 there must be a correlation between verbal and non-verbal behaviour in the teacher if he wants to avoid confusing or threatening his pupils by appearing dishonest to them.

b. Non-verbal behaviour is less consciously controllable than verbal behaviour. Thus a teacher may unconsciously have a negative influence on a pupil's social- and learning behaviour by non-verbally emitting negative expectations or opinions about him. In view of this it is clear how important control of non-verbal signals is, especially in communicative foreign language teaching.

c. For language acquisition it is important for the learner to be in a position where he can safely "try out" his command of the foreign language vis-à-vis his teacher. It is therefore of great value for the teacher to know how to be non-verbally stimulating in the interaction process, giving his learners optimal opportunities to speak. Looking at a pupil, nodding, smiling and "rewarding" certain behaviours are some of these non-verbal stimuli.

d. Some teachers or trainees may need to be made aware of the fact that they have subconsciously developed non-verbal behaviour that has a negative influence on communication. Some teachers have developed a certain "classroom look" or certain other non-verbal ideosyncracies that may irritate pupils. Making these teachers aware of their behaviour may be an important step towards more successful communicative teaching.

e. There are indications that a certain amount of vivacity and mobility on the part of the teacher facilitates the learning of his pupils. Whether or not a teacher makes a stiff and stuffy impression on his learners is to a large degree decided by his non-verbal behaviour.

2.2. Aspects of non-verbal behaviour

We behave non-verbally by means of the muscular structure of our face and body. Thus our gaze determined by our eye-muscles, may indicate that we wish to stimulate interaction. Eye-contact, or the avoidance of it, plays a decisive role in the degree of interaction we may be able to create. A glance may further be kind or inviting, hesitant or fearful, critical or hostile and invite corresponding behaviour in pupils.

The facial muscles determine our facial expression. Whether a teacher looks serious or kind, solemn or smiling may mean a lot for what kind of interaction he will stimulate in his classroom. Some teachers have by nature expressive and mobile faces, others will have to make an effort to make their faces "talk". Speech therapy is commonly considered as very important for those teachers whose voices leave something to be desired. For teachers with rather immobile faces training in using the facial muscles while speaking and looking should be considered at least as important.

Posture, determined by our bodily muscles, betrays how relaxed or tense we are. Pupils are quick to spot the uncertain teacher. What we do with our hands, supporting what we say, writing on the blackbord or the overhead projector or just holding a book is very telling about how we feel. Gestures in this context, show something of the dynamics of our personality and, if not overdone, may have a stimulating effect on classroom interaction. A teacher may signal accessibility or the reverse by letting his hands dangle or crossing his arms or putting them akimbo, and should be aware of these effects of his body language. Moving about too much in the classroom may cause unrest, while immobility of the teacher cannot guarantee concentrated commitment of the learners. He will have to find a way to steer clear of these two extremes in order to create optimal interaction conditions.

Closeness to the pupils in the sense of physical proximity is also of major influence on interaction. Physical proximity makes interaction more personal. So moving about in a classroom full of working pupils

may lead to real and personal interaction in the foreign language.

Until pupils have developed a sense of knowing their teacher personally, they will judge him largely by his outward appearance. They compare him with other teachers and base their judgement on this comparison. Prejudices may thereby be born on the basis of the teacher's outward appearance. The teacher should know about this.

A teacher's voice is probably the most striking facet of his personality. His voice, just like his glance, gives away a lot about him. Our rate of speaking and the loudness of our voice may "speak volumes" about what moves us at a particular moment. Many teachers have a typical classroom voice, with a classroom intonation (Brazil, Coulthard & Johns, 1980) which is quite different from the voice they use in individual contact with pupils. Listening to sound recordings of their classroom speaking may prove a shock to beginning as well as experienced teachers.

Paying attention to these aspects of non-verbal behaviour is necessary for the teacher who wants to raise the level of interaction in his classroom, certainly if he does so in the interest of communicative foreign language teaching.

2.3. Interactive Skills

Next to insight into how best to present himself interactionally and how non-verbal behaviour influences interaction, the teacher needs at least three basic interactive skills.

The first is an overt willingness to learn from his learners instead of solely starting from the premise that a teacher is there to teach. If cooperation in a "communicative" foreign language class is so utterly vital, a teacher should realise that it can only be established if he is also willing to learn from his pupils, to be open to their world and their experiences. Only in this way will he acquire the credibility with his pupils that is so necessary to make real communication possible.

A second very important interactional skill is the skill of empathy,

the ability to open up to other people's ideas and emotions, to imagine how they experience things, in short knowing what makes them tick. Inability to empathize may be caused by:

- merely being tuned in to one's own private problems;
- being mainly directed to judging other people;
- having an extreme wish to 'educate' other people or rather indoctrinate them;
- having too little time or inner peace to be really attentive to other people's experiences;
- having a strong tendency to defend one's own prestige or superiority;
- thinking that others have to be like oneself;
- cherishing prejudices, or the fear that understanding other people is the same as being permissive.

Asking himself which of these points applies to himself might be a start for the teacher to becoming empathetic.

The last interactive skill to be dealt with here is concerned with reacting to pupils' remarks or replies in an accepting manner. This is very important in the learner-centred classroom activities that are invaluable for communicative foreign language teaching. A teacher should deal with what his learners say in a respectful way so that they will learn optimally from whatever mistakes they make instead of shutting themselves off. The teacher shows that he is taking learners' remarks or replies seriously by using them as language material that may be important to other learners and by giving reasons why a certain remark or reply is erroneous or faulty.

3. The Incident Method

The incident method (5) is a training method which may help the (future) teacher, more than an ordinary evaluation session after a period of schoolpractice, to become aware of his self-presentation, his non-verbal behaviour, his interactive skills and their effect on his learners.

The incident method is a didactic procedure which consists mainly of

small-group discussions of certain incidents. The incidents in this context are small events from the practice of teaching. The incident method helps the (future) teacher to enlarge his observation capacity, his sensitivity to and insight into interaction and/or groupprocesses. It may thus lead to new behaviour and the discovery of alternative possibilities in his personality. Some teachers when trying out communicative methodologies come to the conclusion that the communicative approach is not a viable alternative to the structural approach. This may be due to the fact that these teachers have not made the non-verbal and interactional behaviour demanded by the communicative approach an integral part of their personality. The incident method may prove a help to them.

The object of the incident method is to enable the participants, through the analysis and evaluation of small events drawn from their teaching practice, to do the following:

- they learn to really appreciate somebody else's opinion (empathy);
- they learn to see the importance of what at face value seem trivial events;
- they learn to ask questions that are relevant to their (later) professional situation;
- they find and receive solutions to problems in dealing with a class;
- they realise that these problems can be solved in various ways depending on one's ideas about pupils and one's "philosophy of education";
- they learn what it is like to work with a method which can be used at all times to discuss teaching experiences.

The available time per session is 75 minutes, the size of the group is not to exceed 10 persons and each of them needs notepaper.

The procedure is as follows:

1. The first 20 minutes are used to choose an incident. This is done in the following way:
   a) Each participant writes down an incident in which he/she did not really know how to react, or when,with hindsight, he/she feels that he reacted inadequately. Conditions for choosing the

the incident are that it should have really happened to oneself, in exactly the way one describes it. It should also have happened unexpectedly. Its description should be free from any value-judgements and background problems and should be, above all, concise. It should have taken place rather recently, is to be presented in the present-tense and should be described up to the moment a decision was taken. By way of illustration here are two examples of incident descriptions:

- "I am returning from my lunch-break. My class are already there and are blocking my entrance from the inside as well as the outside" and:

  "In spite of repeated efforts to get my class to concentrate on what I am dealing with they remain restive. I utter a threat to throw out the first one who opens his mouth and immediately realise this is a rather unfortunate promise. Within seconds after my "threat" someone indeed opens his mouth".

b) Each participant reads out his own incident. The others take notes on it.

c) One incident is chosen by the group. Motives for selection might be that one recognizes a problem as one that one might encounter oneself or that one thinks one has a solution to.

2. The second 20 minute period is used for information. The group ask further information to get the situation clearer. Questions in this phase might be "How big is your class?", "Did your teaching go all right up to that point?". Questions that should not be asked are questions like" "Didn't you find the experience awful?", although questions which are not exclusively information-directed are permissible as long as the "orginator" of the incident does not "colour" the incident too much with subjective information. Absolutely forbidden are questions aimed at finding out how the teacher in question solved his problem.

3. Decision making and discussion.

a) Each participant writes down his/her own solution to the chosen incident. The exact wording of what he/she would say or do (non-

verbally!!) has to go down on paper and will have to be "delivered" when asked for.

b) The discussion-leader (teacher-trainer or colleague) tries to group the solutions roughly into categories like: agressive, avoiding, empathetic.

c) A discussion then takes place about solutions offered, along the lines of questions like: "Why should you do/say that; What sort of philosophy is behind it?"; "What effect do you expect?"

d) The participant whose incident was selected, then informs the group about which solution he chose at the time.

4. Evaluation (15 minutes).

a) The "originator" of the incident is asked in this place what he gained from the experience. He would also have to answer the question if he would react similarly as before if the incident happened again and why he would do so.

b) Each participant in turn then tries to tell the rest of the group what he has learnt from this technique (in the light of the objectives given on p. 96)

It might be interesting at this point in our argument to consider, by way of illustration, an incident that was recently brought into a group that one of the present authors was in charge of. The incident ran as follows:

"During a lesson in which the pupils are mainly occupied individually with doing communicative exercises and in which I am just lending a helping hand to some pupils, several questions on grammar are asked to which I do not know the answers."

The solutions that were offered by the participants were,in random order:

- Ask if someone from the class knows the answer. If not, admit you do not know and will look up the answer;
- Admit that at that moment you cannot think of the answer, but will return to it in the following lesson;
- Admit that you do not know, look it up and explain during the following lesson;
- If you think there might be pupils who know, pass the question

on to the class and hope for the best (risky procedure!);
- Answer the questions as far as you can, say that you will look up the details;
- Give a quick answer and then ask what they know themselves. pass the question on to the class and think hard. Say that you will look it up to deal with it later;
- Leave the question unanswered until after class;
- Say what you think might be a plausible answer and ask good pupils to say what they think;
- Fob questioners off with a statement that these problems are too difficult to explain, that they concern minor grammatical points but that if they insist on a concreet answer you will return to them later;
- Just continue the lesson;
- Ask questions how they come to ask that particular question and promise you will return to their problems later as your answers will raise more problems than they solve.

From the variety of suggestion noted above it is not difficult to select several that neatly fall into the categories mentioned under 2.3. (Interactive Skills). In order to assess non-verbal behaviour participants could, for instance, react to the way in which other participants in the group "Act out" their solutions to the incident. Non-verbal behaviour that would be unsatisfactory from a communicative point of view could thus be located and discussed.

In conclusion some clear advantages and possible disadvantages of the incident method will be given. Experience has shown that the advantages are that

- all participants are actively and personally engaged in discussing the selected incident in contrast with their participation at one remove in studying "thought-up" cases and in role-plays;
- cooperation in the group is very intense;
- participants bring their own "material";
- participants learn to research a situation systematically;
- participants learn to accept more than one solution to a problem,

and they realise one is not alone in experiencing problems;
- participants learn to formulate questions carefully and to really listen to one another;
- the selection procedure forces participants to think not only about the problems of others but also about the incident that they themselves reported;
- following this method takes little preparation time on the part of the trainer; on the other hand it demands a certain skill in coaching small groups.

Possible disadvantages are that
- the incident method demands a large number of "contact hours" of the trainer;
- the participant whose incident is selected needs protection, certainly if his solution on the spot is at loggerheads with the solution prefered by the group;
- participants may find it hard to report their incident. They may experience this as relatively unsafe for their performance as teachers;
- the time available for the discovery of the deeper cause of the problem chosen, is, as a rule, too short, so that underlying processes that may be relevant cannot be sufficiently dealt with.

4. Conclusion

Summarising, it may be stated that for successful communicative foreign language teaching a teacher needs more than a sound command of the language and a thorough training in communicative methodology. Where Learning Theory Competence, Pedagogical Competence and Psychological competence and an insight (inherent in these three competencies) into ways of self presentation, into the importance of non-verbal behaviour and the value of interactive skills is important for all teaching, it is absolutely invaluable for communicative foreign language teaching. Training in ways of presenting themselves, exposure to situations in which they are made to realise the importance of non-verbal behaviour and discussion sessions on the fundamental role of interactive skills in FLT should therefore be made part and parcel

of pre-service and in-service programmes for foreign language teachers. In this article we hope we have made a convincing case for this thesis. We also hope that the practical suggestions may be of some use.

Notes

1. For reasons of economy and readability we have chosen for the masculine form where the feminine would be equally appropriate.
2. For how affective variables influence success in language acquisition see amongst other scholars like Dulay & Burt and Stevick: Stephen Krashen (1982) pp.30-32.
3. That foreign language learners are quite willing to express themselves affectively in the foreign language can, for instance, be seen quite clearly in Holland, where the younger generation has adopted: "oh, shit!" as a common expression of irritation. To English ears this may sound quite offensive but in Holland it is seen as a rather mild way of saying that you are fed up.
4. In this context it is important how the teacher formulates his question and reacts positively to his learners' answers.
5. A detailed description in Dutch of this method is to be found in Dolle, D.: "Oefenen met de Incident Methode: Een Alternatief voor het Ongestructureerd Uitwisselen van Praktijkervaringen" in Dekker, H. & Plicht, P. eds., Didactische Werkvormen in de Opleiding van Leerkrachten, Amsterdam 1983. What follows is a condensed version of this article.

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Mixed-ability Foreign Language Teaching & the Communicative Approach.

The Pupil's Case.

MIXED-ABILITY FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING & THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH. THE PUPIL'S CASE.

Gerard M. Willems

Introduction

The purpose of this contribution to the present collection of articles on the Communicative Approach and its implications for the training of language teachers is to argue that in attempting to teach Foreign Languages (FL) to mixed-ability classes, the teacher's best approach is the communicative approach. In what follows attention will be paid first to what is to be understood by the communicative approach (I), second to what a mixid-ability class is taken to be (II) and third to how this communicative approach is preferable to other approaches in teaching mixed-ability children to master a language (III). Finally something will be said about the guiding principles for the communicative model for mixed-ability teaching that is offered. These principles

concern the design of the syllabus and the organisation of classroom-work i.e. the methodology. By way of illustration of this organisation some exercises will be shown and concisely described (IV).

I The Communicative Approach

The term "Communicative Approach" although used widely nowadays, is hard to define. One is tempted to try a negative definition first offsetting it against structurally oriented audio/visual and situational approaches. Teaching languages communicatively then is not concentrating exclusively on language as form, on grammatical structures, lexicon, morphology, segmental pronunciation and spelling. It is not judging the learners on their command of all these elements without bothering about what they can do with them in communicating with other human beings. In the Communicative Approach the mastery of the necessary structures and lexis etc. is only seen as a step towards the realisation of what everybody sees as the ultimate objective of all foreign language study: the development of communicative ability in the learner. The learner cannot even hope to progress in his ability "to function in a foreign language situation" (1) if he satisfies himself with learning about the language without actually trying to make it work for himself. On the part of the teacher it means that he should not allow himself to fob his learners off by offering them only the linguistic data of a language without organising realistic and stimulating activities in which they can try their hand at using these data for communication, thus making the language something of themselves. For the teacher this has grave implications on a number of scores. To begin with he will have to revise his basic attitude towards the teaching of language. He will have to learn to see language for what it is: a means of communication in the first place and not a body of knowledge. Without becoming completely permissive he will thus have to change his attitude towards errors. They should only be paid attention to during those phases of the lesson when linguistic input is discussed and practised. Errors should help him and his learners to see

where there are still gaps in the learner's ideas of how the language works. Their correction should not play a part any more in the most important (and perhaps for many teachers new) phase of the FL lesson: the phase when the learner is allowed to "play" and experiment with the language[2]. During this phase the learner should be given ample chance through the organisation of stimulating activities that involve his personality to try his hand at using the FL for real communication i.e. mobilising "the negotiative process between prior knowledge & experience and new knowledge & experience"[3] that language learning consists of. Only in this way can we hope to offer some scope to this highly personal and individual process that language learning is. On the part of the teacher this requires the insight that language simply cannot be taught in the same way as history or social science, that it is only the learner's activity in trying to use the FL for negotiating meaning that, in the long run, can result in the development of a satisfactory communicative performance. If the point seems laboured a bit it is because sometimes teachers use a methodology that makes use of classroom-activities that, at face value, bear a close resemblance to activities employed in a communicative approach. Closer inspection, though, brings to light that the activities cannot be labelled "communicative" at all because they do not allow the learner sufficient freedom and are, to all intents and purposes, geared more towards developing linguistic-competence (the internalising of grammatical rules) than towards developing communicative performance.
The emphasis in the teacher's role thus shifts from his being the "knower-about the language" to his being the "user-of-the-language" and the creative organiser of effective classroom activities. This brings us to the second implication that the communicative approach holds for the language teacher. He will have to be able to effectively organise classroom activities. He will have to guide small groups of learners and individuals in their acquisition processes. They will need his help in making choices in the material they need for this. The teacher will, more than in traditional "frontal" teaching situations, have to be able to create the right atmosphere for language

acquisition processes to take place. In other words a great deal more is needed in a teacher than the the ability to empty a bag of methodological tricks in the classroom(4).

A further implication is, of course, that the teacher needs a basic insight in how communication works in the FL, if possible in contrast with his L1. This is the field of study covered by Pragmalinguistics(5), and Discourse Analysis, both disciplines that are related to the wider field of study called Sociolinguistics. The teacher will also need some elementary information about research in the field of Psycholinguistics to pinpoint his often vague ideas about L2 learning and/or acquisition(6).

To sum up, however, the main point that needs to be made about the Communicative Approach is that it starts from the premise that language learning is a matter for the pupil to achieve and that no amount of "teaching" languages i.e. teaching phonetics, morphology, syntax and semantics has ever successfully made a learner communicatively competent.

II A Mixed-Ability Class

Our discussion has now come to the point where we need to pay some attention to the problem of mixed-ability teaching. In all West-European countries of late years there is a strong educational movement that could bluntly be characterised as a shift in attention from the subject to the learner. Traditionally subjects derived from academic disciplines were used in education to select those pupils who intellectually responded most successfully to the teaching of these subjects. Examinations at the age of 11 or 12 were decisive of whether one was thought fit to enter the walhalla of an academic education or not. No account was taken of the fact that children do not all develop intellectually at the same rate and intellectual intelligence was exclusively valued to the detriment of f.i. manual intelligence. The resulting inequality of opportunities for different learners was great.

The above-mentioned educational movement , mainly carried by socialist

politics, increasingly led to the foundation of a school-type in which the teaching became more learner-centred. In this type of school, the learner is given more time to discover what type of further education suits him, he is given training in developing study-skills and social skills and the curriculum does not concentrate solely on the development of intellectual prowess. It offers, in short, a comprehensive education and the English name for it:"comprehensive school" is, therefore, very apt.(7)

The organisation of this school, as a matter of course, is fundamentally different from the traditional school. The insistence on avoiding stereotyping pupils at too early an age and on developing their social skills led to the formation of mixed-ability classes. In them we find to a much larger extent than is the case in a traditional selective school system, pupils with a wide range of differences. They differ as to intelligence, learning styles, social background (and therefore interests and frames of reference), aptitude, attitude, motivation and learningspeed. It is clear that teaching in classes of this kind, composed of pupils across the ability range on any of the above points, is not going to be a sinecure. Several solutions have been and are being tried like "streaming" (which basically goes against the "comprehensive" grain) and "setting" the pupils according to ability. The fact remains, however, that more than was the case in the past, the (FL)teacher is or will be confronted with classes that contain a wide variety of mixed-ability pupils. He needs an approach to language teaching, a methodology and a capacity for organising classroom activities(8) that will help him to function responsibly and adequately. The first two requirements will be discussed below under III and IV respectively.

III The Communicative Approach and Foreign Language Teaching in a Mixed-Ability Class

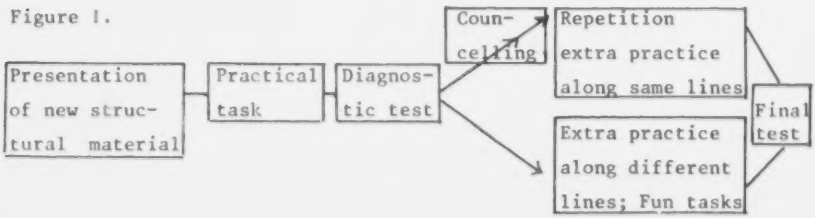
The main purpose of this section is to argue the point made in the Introduction that the best approach to FL teaching in mixed-ability classes is the Communicative Approach.

Traditional structural or grammatical approaches to language teaching

concentrate mainly on the form aspect and on correctness of language use. Leaving aside at this point any discussion about the merits of this approach for the development in the pupil of communicative competence, we can safely state that it only has an appeal, if any, for our more intelligent and able learners. It is an approach that requires learners to abstract from usually unauthentic or unauthentically used language data the structuring and patterning of the target language. On this point there is basically no difference between the grammar-translation approach and the more recent audio-lingual and audio-visual approaches. The grammatical structure is central, language learning is thought to be a linear process and teaching <u>about</u> the language gets a lot more emphasis than offering learners an attractive chance to learn to make appropriate use of the language itself. The concomitant methodology i.e. the presentation of new structural material often on the basis of text input specially prepared to highlight new structures followed by drilling and further practice does, if so, appeal likewise only to the more intellectually gifted pupil who likes to "get it right". The less able pupils soon lose interest and learn nothing at all.

It is obvious how this approach to language teaching does not take the less able pupil into account. That is why the first, structure based, models designed to help the teacher cope with mixed-ability classes fail miserably. The "language-is-grammar-and-you'd-better-get-your-sentences-correct" philosophy underlying the structural approach leads to models that basically look like this:

Figure 1.



There is central presentation of new material, some practice by the pupil with that material and then a diagnostic test after which those

who fail are set extra practice tasks of the same nature and those who pass are given further practice with the language by doing games, crossword puzzles and the like.

If we remind ourselves of the differences between pupils in a mixed-ability class we realise how the above model, with its insistence on language as form favours the intelligent and very able pupil. It does not accomodate different learning styles; it does not cater for different social backgrounds and interests; it does not take different aptitudes and attitudes into account and it takes only one type of motivation seriously. What it does do is allow for different learning speeds, but it uses to this purpose a methodology that is highly demotivating for the slow learner. Experience tells us that this slow learner will more than once find himself drilling away in the repeaters group and will thus never get a chance to use the learned material in practice. By the time he would be able to do so, the class has moved on to new structural input.

What this model does not do either, but this is by the way, is offer scope to the development in the learner of the social skills and study skills that the comprehensive school values so highly. It deals with students individually. Each individual student is busy with his own, largely cognitive, progress through grammar and lexicon, that seem so much more important than the use he may want to put them to in communication. For a broad development of study skills, like using a dictionary, note-making, note-taking and deciding on essentials and details of texts there is also precious little time and opportunity in this model's rather rigorous methodology.

By concentrating mainly on the structure of the FL and on the correctness of usage this model thus misses out on the two above mentioned scores. It does not make use of the possibilities that teaching a language as communication offers the teacher. If he truly realised that language is for communication, he would allow each learner to develop his command of the language in his own way in communication with others, at his own level and at his own speed. He would, thus, also be giving a chance for the pupil to socialise and develop social skills.

If the methodology is truly communicative pupils will learn to really listen to each other[9], cooperate together and learn from one another. Although, therefore, the teacher's attitude to language learning and teaching is of crucial importance he will find it hard, however much devoted to teaching communicatively, to put communicative principles into practice when teaching from a traditional structural syllabus. He will have to invest enormous amounts of time in planning and developing material and his creativity will be severely taxed in inventing a sufficient variety of learning tasks at different levels of difficulty. What he needs is an adequate syllabus/and coherent methodology to bring his communicative model for mixed-ability teaching to life.

Before discussing a communicative syllabus and methodology we should first draw our discussion to a close by attempting to visualise a communicative model for mixed-ability FL teaching. Figure 2 on page 113 is offered as such an attempt to represent a model on communicative principles. In this kind of model the learner is much more central than in the structural model as can be judged from the variety of exercises offered him. Besides he can work in groups as well as individually. If he works fast he can work his way through more of the exercise material than his slower class mate. As the exercises also differ in degree of difficulty they accomodate more able and less able pupils alike. In the groupwork social skills will be practised and in certain exercises study skills can be developed. There is constant diagnostic checking of comprehension and mastery and enough varied exercise material for remedial work for the slow learner. The exercises all aim at involving the learner's world of personal experience and invite him, as it were, to identify with the language thus taking his social background & personal interests into account.

Now that the advantages of the communicative model over the structural one have been dealt with something needs to be said about the guiding principles that underlie this communicative model.

IV Syllabus Design and Methodology of the Communicative Model

If the syllabus designer has no longer the (pseudo-logical) organisa-

Figure 2

INPUT I	TASKS	INPUT II	COMMUNICATIVE TASKS	INPUT III	COMMUNICATIVE TASKS	TERMINATION
Presentation of authentic material. Multi media. More than just one Input item	Much varied practice, oral & written, individual/groupwork. Permanent diagnostic check on mastery & comprehension. Mainly receptive work. Attention for functions & semantico-grammatical phenomena.	See input I	Much varied practice, oral & written, individual & groupwork. Permanent diagnostic check on mastery & comprehension. Receptive & controlled reproductive work, moving from simulation to world of personal experience. Cognitive & affective speech intentions.	See input I and II	Much varied practice, oral & written, individual & groupwork. Permanent diagnostic check on mastery & comprehension. Receptive & less controlled productive work involving world of personal experience. Integrated studyskills work.	Production of oral & written language in reaction to input of some kind; spontaneous reactions without giving reasons & complex reactions stating reasons. No error correction.

Based on Candlin C.N. (1981): The Communicative Teaching of English (Longman).

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tion of the grammar of the language to guide him, he will need some other principle. Our choice, following van Ek (1976), Wilkins (1976), Candlin (1981) and Johnson (1982) are functions of language [10] and semantico-grammatical categories as the first organisation principles. The third principle is one of organisation of the input material. We choose for a thematic organisation for reasons of motivacion and to ensure that certain language functions and lexicon will recur for the learner while he works his way through the theme. Thus textual input is first of all chosen to fit the theme. In the exercise material language functions and grammar for meaning (often in a rule-of-thumb manner) will appear regularly. The events featuring in the thematic input material spark off ideas for the content of the exercises.

It goes without saying that in selecting themes in this communicative model it is the learner and his world of personal experience that is a decisive factor. For the young learner (12-16 age range) we would take, for example, again following van Ek (1976), topic areas like:

1. personal identification;
2. house & home;
3. Life at home;
4. Education & further career;
5. Free time; entertainment;
6. Travel;
7. Relations with other people (love & friendship);
8. Health & welfare;
9. Shopping;
10. Food & drink;
11. Service;
12. Places;
13. Foreign language;
14. Weather.

In these very broad themes that could be given a variety of specific realisations through the form and nature of the input material [11] there are, naturally, inbuilt a number of very important language-functions like: - importing & seeking factual information;

- expressing & finding out intellectual attitudes;
- expressing & finding out emotional attitudes;
- expressing and finding out moral attitudes;
- getting things done (suasion);
- socialising.

These functions will naturally occur in any suitable authentic or authentic sounding[12] input material that fits the theme. The varied practice material will give the learner sufficient practice in mastering those linguistic realisations of the functions that suit him best. The most common grammatical structures will also occur in thematic units concentrating on any of the topic areas mentioned above. They should be be dealt with for meaning. Their notional meaning (Candlin, 1981, p. 32) should be concentrated on and therefore exercises on various grammatical realisations of the same notional meaning could be taken up in the exercise material.

Something remains to be said about the methodology followed in this communicative model and some examples of exercises will be given for illustration.

Perusal of the above communicative model shows that there is a clear progression throughout the thematic unit from comprehension of input material to the free use of language for real communication. In the early stages the emphasis is clearly on comprehension and the exercises offered and the methodology used will be directed to opening up the language to the learner[13]. The first two columns aim at this opening up. This is stage I called the Comprehension stage. Stage II contains exercises that invite the learner to use language reproductively, orally and written, in a controlled situation. This is the Implanting Skills stage. Stage III offers the learner a chance to develop his skills further through exercises challenging him to try to use the language more productively in less controlled situations. After this third stage called Developing Skills, there is the fourth stage in which the learner has to use the skills he has acquired in the course of the unit spontaneously, taking his own ideas as starting points and motivating his position. Although there is a clear difference in nature between the exercise ty-

pes in the different stages several comprehension type exercises of the first stage occur in stage II or even stage III and typical stage II exercises also feature in stage III. Graphically this could be represented as follows:

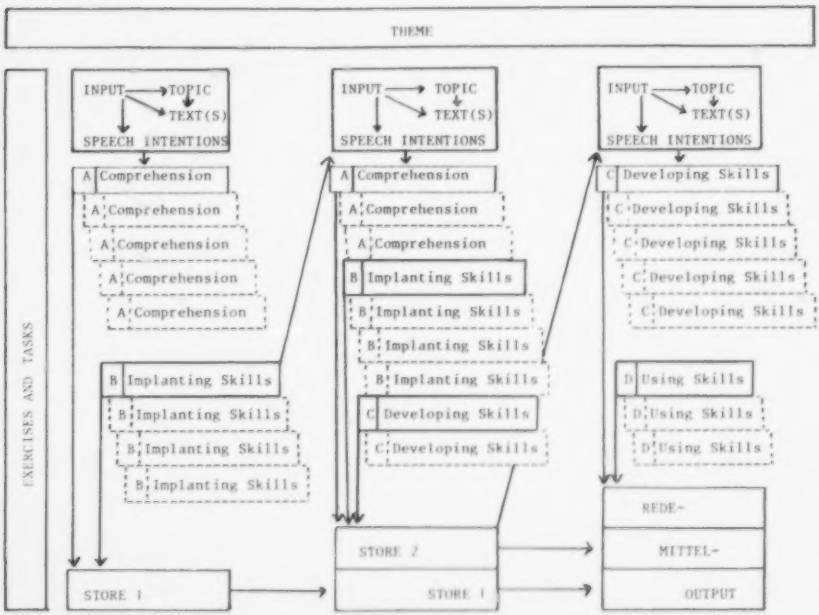


Figure 3 . Schematized Presentation of Unit Procedure Chart.
Taken from Middenschool in Beeld; SLO/pg OLM 1981; OLM31-D 109

Getting acquainted with the various exercise types that are used can perhaps best be done by giving an overview of them. In this overview they will be strictly organised as to the phase they are most prominent in. As we have seen in the above figure, however , they may occur in other phases as well.

Figure 4 . OVERVIEW OF EXERCISE TYPES

OFFER ADDITIONAL HELP TO MAKE TEXTS MORE ACCESSIBLE OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARNER TO ASCERTAIN HIMSELF WHETHER THE MOST IMPORTANT INFO FROM TEXT HAS COME ACROSS	- GET ORGANISED (CONCEPTS) - GET ORGANISED (NARRATIVE) - RIGHT-WRONG EXERCISES - CONNECTING EXERCISES - MATCHING EXERCISES - MULTIPLE CHOICE - RIGHT-WRONG EX. ORALLY - RECOGNITION EXERCISES (CARD GAMES) - WORD SCRAMBLE - .....
PRACTISING REPRODUCTIVELY WITH SPEECH MATERIAL (IMPLANTING SKILLS) TO REALISE: COGNITIVE SPEECH INTENTIONS (place, time, number, sort, manner, "grammatical structures" used), AFFECTIVE SPEECH INTENTIONS (personal, emotional reactions to facts, "set phrases").	- SWITCHBOARD - MEMORISATION OF LINGUISTIC REALISATION OF COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE SPEECHINTENTIONS - PICTURE STIMULUS - RESTORATION (insertion-catch-words + connectives-picture guidance - gap text-flow chart-defective dialogue) - GUIDED INTERACTION
MORE PRODUCTIVE USE OF SPEECH MATERIAL - less strongly guided - transfer to situations that are more accessible to learner PRACTICE OF "STUDY SKILLS" IN PREPARATION OF AND TRAINING FOR FREE UTTERANCE IN DISCUSSION	- OPEN DIALOGUE - REFERENTIAL COMPOSITION - SUBSTITUTION TABLE - OPEN ENDED COMPOSITION - SURVEY SHEET (summing up info/questionnaire results), - RECOGNITION (situation/factual evidence/speech intentions register - UNDERLINING/HIGHLIGHTING - NOTE TAKING/NOTE MAKING
THE FREE USE OF THE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN REACTION TO A TEXT OR IN A DISCUSSION - spontaneous reaction without stating reasons - reacting-giving first simple, later more complex reasons - reacting quickly in a discussion	- LANGUAGE CHARTS - DISCOURSE CHARTS

As can be seen some of the exercises (multiple-choice, right/wrong) are not new. What is claimed to be new is their grouping and function in the communicative model.
As the term: "Get organized" for an exercise is perhaps new, here is an example of such an exercise:

Figure 5 : Get Organized (concept)
The Get Organized exercise type can be used to introduce and practise selected lexical items. For instance, the aim here is to introduce to the learner certain 'technical terms' from the world of shoplifting. Understanding the terms comes from matching the terms, on the left, to their 'definitions' on the right. A simple way of doing that is to pencil in a line joining the two appropriate parts.

a shoplifter	spots shoplifters
a "regular"	pinches things from shops
a regular shoplifter	has often shoplifted
the store detective	steals from the same shop often
shoplifting (shop theft)	tries to catch shoplifters
an "old hand"	is stealing things from shops

(From: Speak for Yourself, Law-breakers, 1.1 (altered and abridged))
Taken from C. Candlin (1981).

The learner has to connect the boxes in the right way. This exercise can be used for checking the comprehension of vocabulary and the narrative. For checking on the comprehension of "sound" vocabulary here is an original exercise of the "recognition" type:

Figure 6.

RECOGNITION EXERCISE (CARD GAME)

Instructions: Listen to the tape. Get into groups. Put the cards into the order of the sounds you hear. Afterwards make sure you all agree.

HOLLOW LAUGHTER	SCRATCHING
CREAKING	TA-PP-ING
FOOT STEPS	HOWL
SCREAM	FIRE
WHINING	GUILLOTINE
MISSING	DRIPPING

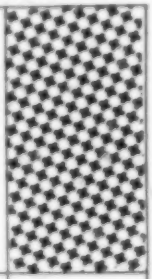
The learner is expected to cut out the boxes and arrange the "sound" words in the order in which he hears them on the tape.
Here is an example of a so-called "switchboard" exercise providing the pupil with practice in the language material that he needs to realise cognitive and affective speech-intentions.

Figure 7 .

S W I T C H B O A R D II

DON'T WORRY !

There is a crowd on Gibbet Hill watching the mystery object.
Imagine you are among all the frightened people.

Express your fear:		Calm your partner:	
I'm afraid	it will blow up any minute.	Calm down.	
	if it blows up it will destroy everything.		
I'm frightened	the thing will kill us all.	It's all right.	
	the people in the flying saucer will attack us.	Don't be afraid,	that won't happen.
I'm sure	the police will lose control of the object.	Don't worry,	that's out of the question.
	the whole situation will get out of control.	Don't be frightened,	there's no danger of that.
I've got a feeling	the mystery object will attack London.		

As can be seen the use of language for communication starts here, be it controlled. The learner can feel that what he is practising has a direct relevance to what he is expecting and expected to be able to do with the language.

An example of how the notion of "duration of time" i.e. grammar for meaning can be practised is a "Defective Dialogue" type of exercise:

Figure 8a . Info-Sheet

I have been fishing for hours and hours
Let's go back. We have been sailing since 9 o'clock.
I don't know what's the matter with her. She has been reading since 10 o'clock.
What about a swim? We have been sitting here for 4 hours now
They have been playing water polo since 2 o'clock. What a bore!
Hurry up! I have been waiting for 15 minutes now
Come on, let's go swimming. You have been lying here for 3 hours now

Figure 8b

RESTORATION

CAROLINE REDCLIFE	ROLAND SCHMIDT
14 years old Canterbury South of England near Dover pupil - speak German + speak French + pop music Magna Carta Slade + Melanie	14 years old Frankfurt Germany + speak English learnt at school for 4 years will stay for 3 weeks + transistor radio + pop music Melanie - Slade

Caroline: Your English is very good.
Roland: Do you think so?
Caroline: .....? (learn)
Roland: For 4 years.

Jack: Do you like this town?
John: It bores me stiff
Jack:.....?(live)
John: For 3 months.

Peter: What's wrong with your bicycle?
Bob: It's got a flat tyre. I can't find the hole.
Peter:.....?(look)
Bob: For 2 hours.

Reporter: Your boys are very good footballers.
Coach: You bet they are.
Reporter:.....?(coach)
Coach: For 1 year.

Caroline: Oh, Roland, you here already?
Roland: Of course, it's a quarter past.
Caroline:.....(wait)
Roland: Since 4 o'clock.

Henry: The guitarist in our group let us down. So we're looking for a new one.
Mac: Why don't you take me on?
Henry:.....?(play)
Mac: Since 1968.

Mike: Would you dance with me?
Karin: No, thanks, I'm too tired. My feet are hurting.
Mike:.....?(dance)
Karin: Since they opened here.

Malcolm: What an enormous stamp collection you've got.
Kevin: Well, it took me quite a time to get it together.
Malcolm:.....?(collect)
Kevin: Since I was a schoolboy.

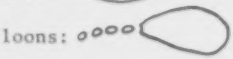
(From: Caroline, I Love You, 3.3 and 3.4)

A freer use of the language is stimulated in so-called "Referential Compostion" exercises. The learners are first given a visual with a dialogue that fits the theme (in this case: Caroline I Love You (see note 11). A slight alteration in the situation is suggested and the learner is invited to react personally, as he would under the circumstances, filling the empty balloons.

Figure 9a INFO-SHEET

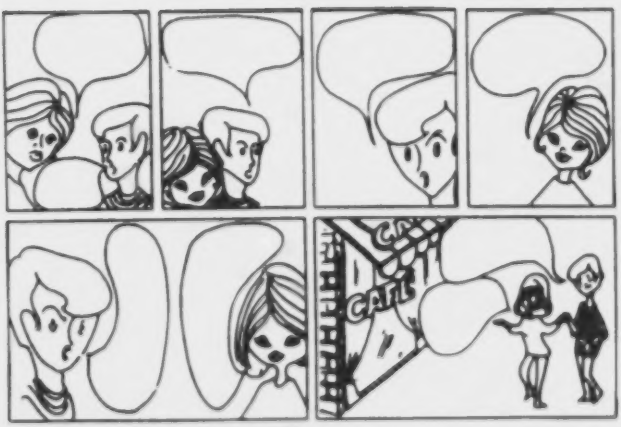
This is a picture-story. In the story a boy and a girl meet each other after school. They talk to each other. But the things they say are not the same as the things they think.

What they say is in these balloons:

Their thoughts are in these balloons: 

1
There she is.... I was hoping I'd see her
Thank God school is over
2
I like her very much. She's always so cheerful She's got a nice smile
It was a real drag day today, wasn't it?
3
I wouldn't half like to see her more often
And my class really gets on my nerves
4
I hope I don't get on his nerves I think he's super
So does mine .....
5
Should I ask her to come to Toni's for a Coke?
Er, um... How about .....?
I'd like to spend some more time with him
Yes, ?
6
DAMN....
Oh, cheerio then, see you
Here comes my bus
WHAT A SHAME!

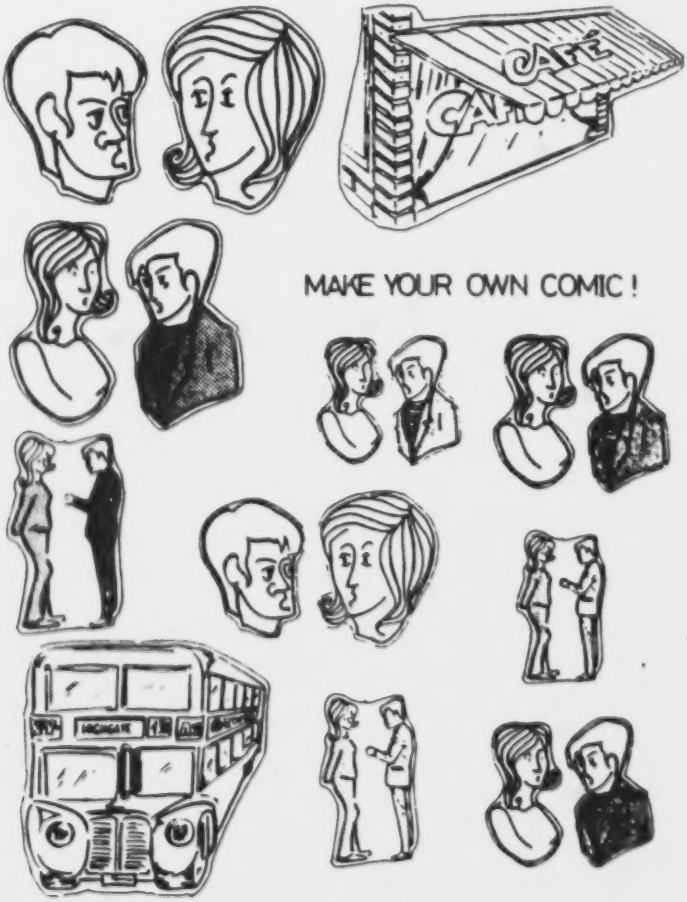
Figure 9b. You are not like Sue and Bob, say what you think.



This can be extended into an even more complex exercise like the following where the pupil (by himself or in pairs) is expected to write a comic strip with the characters and the situation visually provided.

Figure 9c .

OPENENDED COMPOSITION



In this phase there is excellent opportunity to vary the exercises communicatively to accomodate the fast and more able learners. They may be set assignments aimed at recognizing register. They have to decide, for instance, whether someone speaking on the tape is addressing an equal, a superior or an inferior, or someone he likes or dislikes.

For a study skills exercise like "Note Taking" grids like the following are used. The learners have to fill them in while listening to a tape.

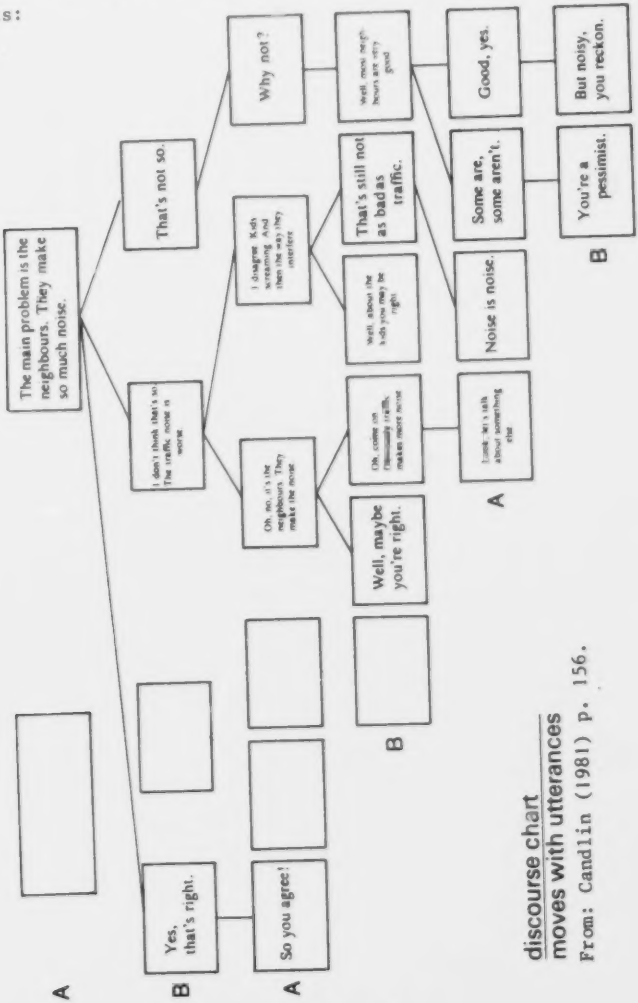
Figure 10. N O T E T A K I N G

What do they report about the landing of the aliens?

	GEORGE MITCHELL (PUB SCENE)	RADIO NEWSFLASH	DAILY MIRROR	RADIO: THE NEWS
SIZE COLOUR ORIGIN FURTHER INFORMATION				
WHERE?				
WHEN?				
WITH WHAT RESULTS?				
WHAT IS BEING DONE?				

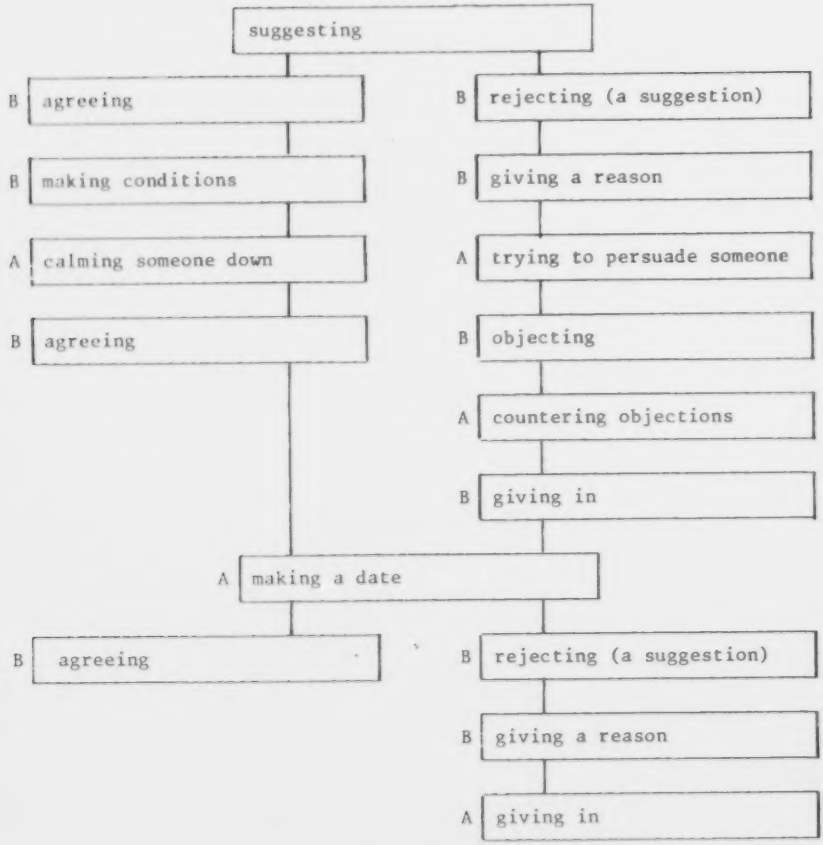
In the last phase, finally, the learner is invited to speak spontaneously about a topic that forms part of or has a clear link with the theme. He does so in a discussion with his class mates, reacting to a stimulus. The objective is that he reacts spontaneously, first without, later with stating the reasons for his reaction. Language- or discourse charts could be used as stimuli and guidance. Here are two such discourse charts:

Figure 11.


The main problem is the neighbours. They make so much noise.
That's not so.
I don't think that's so. The traffic noise is worse
Why not?
I disagree. Kids screaming. And then the way they interfere
Oh, no, it's the neighbours. They make the noise
Well, maybe you're right.
Well, more neighbours are very good
That's still not as bad as traffic.
Oh, come on. Continuously traffic, makes more noise
Well, above the kids you may be right.
Look, let's talk about something else
Good, yes.
Some are, some aren't.
Noise is noise.
But noisy, you reckon.
You're a pessimist.
A
B
A
B
A
B
Yes, that's right.
So you agree!

discourse chart
moves with utterances
From: Candlin (1981) p. 156.

Figure 12. Now work with a partner!
Using the note-taking sheet, make up
a dialogue on the same topic.



(From: Terry Moston: Bank Holiday Weekend (unpubl. MS.)

Of course it is not possible to give a representative picture of how thematic units are constructed or how the exercises work within the context of the theme by just giving a few examples. Readers that are interested in a more extensive overview of how this communicative model is intended to work are referred to C.N. Candlin ed. The Communicative Teaching of English, Longman 1981.

It is the present writer's hope, however, that this contribution has provided the reader (teacher and teacher trainer alike) with a case for considering a communicative model an extremely viable proposition in language teaching. It has the advantage over the structural approach of considering language learning as a highly personal and therefore complex activity on the part of the learner. At the same time, because of this, it is an eminently usable model for FL teaching in mixed-ability classes.

Notes

1) This quote was taken from Dolle, et al: "Communicative FL Teaching and how it Reflects on the Training of Modern F.L. Teachers" in EJTE vol 6, no. 2, 1983.

2) There is important support for this attitude to errors from psychology. The Dutch educational psychologist C. van Parreren has developed a theory of (language) learning which on the basis of experiments claims that all our (learning) experiences leave traces in our brain. These traces may (and often do) link up to form systems. Learning a new language actually constitutes the development of a new system of traces. The point at issue here is that during the learning process affective factors play an important role. They also will be taken up as traces in the system. Thus a teacher who concentrates mainly on error-improvement will produce learners that are extremely diffident and uncertain. Speaking a foreign language for them is an extremely hazardous business, often something they do not like to do. It is tied up in their associative system with bad marks on reports and consequent frustration.

3) See Breen and Candlin, 1980.

4) A more fundamental discussion of the implications of the communicative philosophy for FL teacher training can be found in Dolle & Willems' contribution to this collection (see pp. 87-102).

5) For a discussion of the importance of Pragmatics for FL teaching see Philip Riley's contribution to this reader (pp. 37-83).

6) For the contrast between language learning and acquisition see: Stephen D. Krashen: Second Language Acquisition & Second Language Learning.

7) In different West-European countries we find different names for this type of school. Germany has its "Gesamtschule"; Denmark its "Folkeschole"; Sweden its "Grundskola" and Holland its "Middenschool" (or more recently "Voortgezet Basisonderwijs" (VBaO).

8) For an illustration of what is meant here see Hubbard et al.(1983) pp. 310-312.

9) For an instance of the difference between a structural drill and a communicative one see Keith Johnson (1982) pp. 156-162.

10) See for a broad categorisation of functions of language: Candlin (1981) p. 80. Candlin gives:
   1) Language as a means of expressing knowledge, facts, ideas and concepts.
   2) Language as a means of expressing social conventions and behaviour.
   3) Language as a means of social control.
   4) Language as a means of expressing opinions and needs, of persuading others and of negotiating (mis)interpretations.

11) Various thematic units have been developed over the past few years in Germany, Holland and Denmark. The main impetus is coming from comprehensive school circles.
Some of the themes are: German boy meets English girl on a Danish camp-site - they get acquainted, talk about their hobbies, their preferences in music and fall in love (title: Caroline I Love You); an invasion from outer space in the centre of London and all the panic and confusion that causes (Ugly Brutes); running away from home because of problems with parents (Runaways); Gordon Banks, the famous English goalkeeper getting involved in an accident with a lot of medical legal and social consequences in which the media are strongly involved (An Accident). These have all been developed in West Germany under the title ISSUES, Baukästen für den Englischunterricht and are published by Langenscheidt-Longman, München 1978.

12) "Authentic or authentic sounding" is to be taken as meaning "for communication" or as "(likely to) occur(ring) in natural human communication". An input text like the following:
"It is Monday morning. Billy is running down the High street. He is running to school. Now he must cross the road. The lights are red, but Billy starts running across the road." (Candlin, 1981, p. 14)

seems contrived to present the learner with new grammar and lexis more than to represent real life language use. By using this type of language input the syllabus designer confronts the learner with the difficulty to recognise what he reads as real language use, for there is no real communicative purpose behind it. Into the bargain, and this is even worse, he also surreptitiously indoctrinates the learner into believing that the F.L. is not for communication but for the school curriculum.

13) The exercise typology described was taken from Candlin (1981) pp. 64 and 65.

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Comprehension de Texte et Actes de Parole

COMPREHENSION DE TEXTE ET ACTES DE PAROLE

Jan P. Menting

Depuis une dizaine d'années, les théories sur les actes de parole ont pénétré dans le domaine de l'enseignement des langues. Dans la pratique, leurs effets se manifestent surtout dans deux aspects de cet enseignement: la définition et la description détaillée des objectifs (genre Niveau Seuil) et la didactique de la production orale (amener l'élève, de façon ou d'autre, à réaliser oralement tel(s) acte(s) de parole dans une situation donnée).

D'autre part, l'enseignement concernant la compréhension de textes oraux ou écrits se poursuit dans les voies qui se sont tracées peu à peu depuis la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale et l'introduction du magnétophone: présentation de textes oraux suivis de différents exercices d'analyse, de compréhension et de reproduction; différentes formes

d'élaboration de textes écrits, par exemple le résumé, les questions à choix multiple sur la forme linguistique du texte ou sur son contenu. Les actes de parole comptent pour bien peu dans ce genre de travaux.

Il est évident que cet état des choses n'est pas fait pour favoriser une didactique intégrée des différents aptitudes (compréhension et expression orale et écrite), aptitudes qui - de par leur définition "behaviouriste" nette et tranchante - sont, à mon avis, déjà trop enclines à vouloir mener une vie autonome dans l'enseignement, et qui sont susceptibles d'être considérées, et par conséquent, traitées, comme des entités à part, dans les manuels, dans la didactique concrète, dans les emplois du temps. Si actes de parole il y a (malgré toutes sortes de problèmes quant à leur définition, quant à la construction d'une taxonomie tant soit peu satisfaisante), ils peuvent, doivent même jouer un rôle partout dans le processus d'acquisition. Si on les utilise uniquement dans la didactique de l'expression orale, en excluant leur utilisation possible dans la didactique des autres aptitudes, l'on risque de tronquer son enseignement de différentes manières:

- Les notions inhérentes aux théories sur les actes de parole sont évidemment importantes pour la compréhension, l'analyse, l'interprétation de textes tout aussi bien que pour la production orale.
- L'interprétation justement, c.à.d. la compréhension "profonde" d'un texte, pourrait y gagner, pourrait être singulièrement approfondie.
- Les textes offrent une diversité de réalisations linguistiques des actes de parole (parole parlée et parole écrite) qui fournissent à l'élève un riche fonds de possibilités pour son expression orale et écrite.
- Il n'est pas dit que les listes d'actes de parole ou de "fonctions" qui circulent ou qui ont été élaborées depuis la publication du Threshold Level, en 1975, soient définies une fois pour toutes. Leur justification théorique est extrêmement faible et pour une bonne part fortuite et subjective. Ceci vaut pour les taxonomies en tant que telles aussi bien que pour leur réalisation sous forme

linguistique. Si on se restreint, dans l'enseignement, à ces taxonomies existantes et à leur réalisation dans l'expression orale, on néglige toutes les possibilités qui sont cachées dans les textes: fonctions, actes de paroles autres - et dans d'autres domaines - que ceux qui figurent traditionnellement (déjà!) sur les listes et dans les matériaux didactiques et qui sont tirés d'une bande assez étroite d'usages de la parole: une riche collection de possibilités de réalisation linguistique.

Si je propose de tirer davantage profit des aspects réceptifs des actes de parole tels qu'on peut les introduire dans l'enseignement des langues, et, dans ce but, de nous intéresser davantage à ce que nous proposons à l'élève comme textes oraux et écrits dans la langue-cible, la question se pose: comment procéder?
Il faut d'abord se faire une idée de la façon dont ces textes sont traités, communément. Pour la commodité du raisonnement, subdivisons-les en deux groupes: textes pour les moins avancés et textes pour les avancés, par exemple dans un cadre scolaire: textes-collège, textes-lycée.

Les textes plus simples servent différents buts didactiques:

- développer les conditions de base pour la compréhension de la langue-cible, c.à.d. adapter l'élève au nouveau code sous sa forme orale et écrite: discrimination des sons; délimitation et reconnaissance des mots, des syntagmes; adaptation à l'orthographe; développement d'une attitude (dans l'écoute, dans la lecture) telle que l'élève n'a pas besoin de traductions pour comprendre: entraînement à la "compréhension directe";
- donner à l'élève, le plus tôt possible, le sentiment qu'il peut faire quelque chose dans cette nouvelle langue, que c'est une véritable langue qui fonctionne comme sa propre langue, et non pas un tas de structures et de vocables détachés);

- introduire de nouvelles formes linguistiques (structures, lexique) qui seront traitées ultérieurement;

- réemployer des formes linguistiques déjà traitées.

En termes généraux, on peut dire que les textes sont souvent artificiels dans ce sens qu'ils ont été conçus ou simplifiés en vue d'emplois didactiques; que leur contenu est simple, et que celui-ci est ressenti comme moins important que la forme linguistique; qu'ils sont souvent destinés soit à réaliser un transfert au côté expressif, productif du processus d'apprentissage, soit à constituer un corpus de démonstration pour la "théorie" (explication de faits de grammaire etc.), soit l'inverse des deux.
Les textes pour les avancés sont authentiques ou quasi-authentiques; leur contenu peut ou doit être pris au sérieux, n'est plus sans engagement; le lien avec les aspects productifs de l'apprentissage est plus lâche et bien moins direct.

Vu ces différences, il serait recommandable de traiter les fonctions et les actes de parole de façon différente aussi, si on prend des textes de compréhension comme cadre, ou comme base.

Dans les textes pour les non-avancés on pourrait se concentrer sur la détection de fonctions, d'actes de parole et leur réalisation en faits de langue, pour les insérer ensuite dans des exercices de réemploi, ou bien pour les comparer à ce qui a déjà été traité ou entraîné dans ce domaine et pour faire des extensions utiles.
Prenons un exemple (voir Annexe I): soit un texte, écrit ou oral, représentant une vive discussion, une querelle qui se développe. Il est intéressant, après que le texte a été présenté et que les élèves l'ont compris globalement, de procéder à une sorte d'analyse en commun, pour établir le progrès dans la discussion, les phases dans la querelle, et pour voir comment les locuteurs concernés s'y prennent.

Ensuite, dans une phase de transfert, on peut (faire) enscèner une

autre querelle. On peut aussi faire des rajouts, ou donner des extensions à ce qui s'est déjà fait préalablement, sous les étiquettes p. ex. de "persuasion", "refus", "attaque", "défense".

Dans les textes pour les avancés, on pourrait s'y prendre autrement. D'abord, l'initiative pourrait, beaucoup plus que pour le genre d'élèves dont il vient d'être question, être laissée à l'étudiant. Ensuite, l'on pourrait beaucoup davantage tirer profit du fait que le contenu du texte est important en soi; que le texte n'est plus uniquement là à titre d'exemple, de démonstration, de présentation de formes linguistiques, n'est plus un prétexte, en somme.
Partant de là, il serait recommandable d'intégrer certaines approches de souche pragmalinguistique (notamment les modèles et les résultats d'analyse quant aux théories sur la situation de communication, la grammaire du texte, les actes de parole) dans l'étude et l'analyse des textes proposés, enrichissant ainsi l'arsenal traditionnel des instruments d'analyse. Il s'agirait de se servir de ces approches pour mieux placer ou replacer ou encadrer ou caractériser un texte ou un fragment de texte, pour mieux analyser comment les formes linguistiques et leur agencement servent les objectifs de l'auteur ou du locuteur, pour mieux définir quelles sont les caractéristiques, les particularités de tel genre de textes (annonce, texte officiel, communiqué de presse, article scientifique, texte de propagande, de publicité, mode d'emploi, textes dans le domaine de la technique, texte de popularisation, débat, description littéraire, poésie, prière).
Dans un deuxième temps, on pourrait procéder à des comparaisons avec des textes comparables dans la langue maternelle, à des études contrastives, à des traductions, à des emplois actifs de la langue étrangère en créant, en confectionnant soi-même des textes, des brins de texte, à base d'élements de contenu fournis sous une forme neutre, et en réemployant les formes et les moyens appropriés qu'on a étudiés.

Dans l'exemple que je présente (Annexe II: la première partie du discours télévisé du Président de la République du 23 mars 1983), j'ai

essayé d'illustrer en partie ce que je viens de proposer. L'on me dira que je reste tout près de la traditionnelle explication de texte, et qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau dans une attaque du texte à l'aide d'instruments de souche pragmalinguistique.

L'on constate, en effet , que, dès qu'on se met à analyser des textes tant soit peu sophistiqués, tout ce que les approches pragmalinguistiques et les taxonomies bien simplistes du genre Threshold Level nous ont apporté jusqu'ici, ne bouleverse point ce qui s'est fait depuis longtemps déjà sans ce concours.

Tant mieux! Il ne s'agit pas, pour l'enseignement des langues, de créer des "écoles" (approches, méthodes), avec leurs adeptes, qui se renient mutuellement et s'engagent dans des luttes compétitives peu fructueuses.

Pour le domaine qui nous intéresse ici, mieux vaut tirer profit des incentives fournis par les nouvelles théories et approches (surtout pour ce qui est de la didactique de l'expression orale aux niveaux I et II), en les étendant sur l'enseignement des autres aptitudes linguistiques et sur des textes, des emplois de langue plus compliqués que les situations et les jeux de rôle proposés dans les manuels modernes. La motivation y gagnera, et l'on pourrait favoriser ainsi une meilleure cohésion entre les différentes aptitudes à maîtriser et entre les différents niveaux. Et si, ce faisant, "fonctions" et "actes de parole" rencontrent sur leur chemin des situations et des textes diffiles, où ils ont du mal à se définir, à se manifester clairement: tant mieux pour eux. La réflexion sur leur existence également y gagnera.

Il va de soi que si une approche fonctionnelle de l'enseignement des langues doit s'étendre également sur la compréhension de textes oraux et écrits, et ne reste plus confiné dans le domaine de l'expression orale, les responsables de la formation des professeurs doivent en tenir compte. Il y aurait là une possibilité attrayante de marier certains aspects de la formation littéraire (analyse de textes) ou de la formation en rhétorique des étudiants/futurs professeurs aux nouvelles

conceptions de l'enseignement communicatif des langues.
Ne manquons pas cette belle occasion qui s'offre de colmater un peu la fissure qui bien souvent se crée entre ce qu'on donne à faire à un étudiant de langue pendant sa formation et ce qu'il est censé faire devant la classe en tant que professeur.

Annexe I

A - Tu viens avec moi au cinéma, ce soir?

B - Ah non, sûrement pas.

A - Comment, sûrement pas? Tu ne veux pas ou quoi?

B - Je vois que tu as la mémoire courte.....

A - Mais enfin, explique-toi! Ça t'amuse, les devinettes?

B - En tout cas, ce qui ne m'amuse pas, c'est de poireauter encore une fois pendant une heure, et pour rien, comme la semaine dernière. Tu m'as gâché toute la soirée. Tu n'as même pas pris la peine de m'avertir. Cela ne t'est même pas venu à l'esprit de t'excuser, au moins.

A - Voilà! Ça y est ! Tu n'en démords pas, hein? Combien de fois je t'ai dit déjà que je n'y pouvais rien!
J'avais voulu te prévenir, mais.....

B - *Ouais, je sais. Je la connais, ton histoire. Tu n'as pas trouvé de cabine téléphonique, et puis tu as voulu venir quand-même, mais ton pneu a crevé, et puis ta soeur n'a pas voulu t'emmener, et puis, et puis, et patati et patata. Tu ne t'imagines tout de même pas que je crois toutes ces salades? Tu te moques des gens.*

A - *Oh, zut alors! Si tu le prends sur ce ton-là.....*
J'ai fait ce que j'ai pu, mais tu ne veux pas m'écouter. Tu aimes mieux jouer les offensés. Eh bien, vas-y. Moi je ne veux plus y revenir, j'en ai ma claque.

B - *C'est que je t'en veux, moi. C'est que je ne m'y attends pas, de la part de mes amis. Me planter là, tout bonnement. Et puis, ça croit pouvoir revenir et m'inviter comme si de rien n'était!*
Eh bien, non, mon petit gars, ça ne marche plus, ce truc-là!

A - *Toi, tu sais ce que tu devrais faire.....rentrer chez toi prendre une douche froide pour te calmer les nerfs.*

B - *Ça alors, il ne manquait plus que ça. Non mais c'est vraiment le bouquet.*
Il me laisse tomber et je n'aurais pas le droit de me mettre en colère!
Dis-toi bien et une fois pour toutes que je ne me laisse plus marcher sur les pieds.

A - *Bon, eh bien, moi je vais te dire une chose: les copains comme toi, j'en ai ras-le-bol. Salut!*

B - *Ça va, j'ai compris. Je suis un emmerdeur, un énergumène.*
Eh bien, l'énergumène, il t'emmerde.

Annexe II a

« Françaises, Français, au jour et à l'heure convenus, me voici devant vous pour vous dire où nous en sommes, où nous allons. Ma tâche en ce moment de notre histoire est d'assurer la conduite
1. du pays, de connaître pour les comprendre vos aspirations, vos besoins, de vous montrer la route à suivre et de vous faire partager, autant qu'il m'est possible, la conviction que j'ai de l'intérêt national.

Cette tâche est belle et difficile. Vous m'en avez confié l'honneur, j'en assumerai toute la charge.

Les 6 et 13 mars derniers, vous vous êtes exprimés. J'ai perçu, moi aussi, dans les résultats du premier tour des élections municipales, l'expression de votre inquiétude, même si au second tour la confiance l'a emporté en fin de compte sur le doute.
2. Mais le réalignement monétaire décidé, lundi à Bruxelles, a rendu plus actuelle encore cette interrogation : la politique engagée depuis le mois de mai 1981 est-elle bonne pour la France ?

Puisque j'en ai pris la responsabilité, il m'appartient de vous répondre et je le ferai sans détour.

Vaincre sur trois fronts

Oui, cette politique est bonne parce qu'elle est nécessaire pour qui veut changer la société française en ce qu'elle a d'injuste pour le plus grand nombre de ceux qui la composent et qui lui apportent, par leur travail et leur talent, sa richesse principale qu'est la ressource humaine.

Oui, cette politique est bonne pour qui sait les contraintes qu'impose un environnement international soumis à d'autres politiques économiques que la nôtre.
3. Or nous n'avons pas voulu et nous ne voulons pas isoler la France de la Communauté européenne dont nous sommes partie prenante, la séparer du mouvement qui porte cette Europe à devenir, enfin, l'un des grands partenaires du monde, comme nous n'avons pas voulu et nous ne voulons pas, quelque réserve que nous fassions, nous éloigner de l'alliance sur laquelle repose une part de notre sécurité.

De la sorte, nous avons pris des risques. Ce sont ceux que peut prendre une nation comme la nôtre, sûre et fière de son droit à l'indépendance de ses choix.

En dépit des difficultés, nous avons progressé sur ce chemin ardu, réalisé en peu de mois plus de réformes, plus d'avancées sociales que la France n'en avait connues durant un demi-siècle.

Mais, maintenant, nous avons plus que jamais à vaincre sur trois fronts : le chômage, l'inflation, le commerce extérieur.

Annexe II b

Actes de parole ou fonctions	Moyens linguistiques
1. Susciter l'attention:	
a. gravité du moment	a. apostrophe solennelle; agencement syntactico-rythmique de la première et de la dernière phrase; termes comme: tâche, histoire, assumer, interêt national, conviction, honneur, charge.
b. lien, contrat entre le spectateur/électeur et lui, l'élu responsable	b. jeu de je/me/ma envers vous/vos/votre dans les phrases; agencement de la dernière phrase; mélange de termes solennels et familiers dans la première phrase; idée du rendez-vous tout de suite après l'apostrophe.
c. honnêteté; le chef digne de confiance	c. idée du rendez-vous; termes comme: assurer la conduite, montrer la route, conviction, confié.
2. Créer un moment d'hésitation, d'arrêt, de suspense:	
a. le contrat conclu en 1981 et la politique engagée depuis sont-ils toujours valables, justifiés?	a. termes comme: inquiétude, doute, interrogation, le point d'interrogation, répondre; mention de faits négatifs comme: les résultats du premier tour, la dévaluation (réalignement).
b. Oui (ayez confiance en moi).	b. termes comme: confiance, emporte, responsabilité, sans détour; le fait du second tour positif; le fait qu'il a perçu leur doute.

3. Convaincre par des arguments nuancés:

   a. les objectifs sont bons, et le resteront.
   b. la route sera difficile
      - nous ne sommes pas seuls à déterminer notre destin
      - nous voulons rester loyaux, solidaires.
   c. les premiers pas vers le succès sont faits.

   a. tournure rhétorique de "Oui, cette politique...." (2x); société injuste; justice pour tous; termes comme: changer, travail, talent, richesse, humaine.
   b. termes comme: contraintes, impose, risques, difficultés, ardu; la mention des autres politiques; la mention de la C.E.E. et de l'O.T.A.N.; la mention de l'objectif d'une Europe-grand-partenaire du monde (de Gaulle?); des termes comme: ne pas isoler, séparer, ne pas nous éloigner, partie prenante, tournure rhétorique de "nous n'avons pas voulu et nous ne voulons pas".
   c. En dépit de; progressé, réalisé; "quelques mois" envers "un demi-siècle".

Il y a, en outre, un certain nombre de moyens et de procédés linguistiques qui jouent leur rôle d'une partie du texte à l'autre: en préparant le terrain; en annonçant tel argument, telle difficulté; en rappelant tel fait mentionné dans un passage précédent etc.

The Socio-Cultural Dimension of Integrated Language Studies

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION OF INTEGRATED LANGUAGE STUDIES

David Whybra

According to the education or training of teachers the focal point of further training and education very often varies on a linear scale from a methodological emphasis to a subject knowledge emphasis. Colleagues who have had a university education should be approached from the subject knowledge angle working towards a methodological preparation. Their feeling of security concerning subject knowledge can further their confidence and enterprise with regard to methodology.

Colleagues from teacher training institutes can be approached via methodology, working towards an enrichment of their subject knowledge. The self-confidence they have in methodology makes it possible to make full use of the scope which is available in the broad area of subject knowledge.

This differentiation is worthwhile to permit teachers of all pupil age groups to experience the socio-cultural dimension of foreign language teaching.

Considering the following text from D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover which will subsequently be contrasted with a newspaper feature, it would be quite natural to do the formal literary appreciation familiar to university graduates. We can then use Lawrence's fears of the encroachment of machines into the very nature of man, which are basically represented here by the pregnant statement, "One England blots out another" and by his frightening description of the "common people", to lead over to an article from the Daily Mirror on life in "the street of the average British worker". The necessary comments on text types must be made and linguistic examination of the two texts should ensue.

England, my England! But which is my England? The stately homes of England make good photographs, and create the illusion of a connection with the Elizabethans. The handsome old halls are there, from the days of Good Queen Anne and Tom Jones. But smuts fall and blacken on the drab stucco, that has long ceased to be golden. And one by one, like the stately homes, they are abandoned. Now they are being pulled down. As for the cottages of England - there they are - great plasterings of brick dwellings on the hopeless countryside.
Now they are pulling down the stately homes, the Georgian halls are going. Fritchley, a perfect old Georgian mansion, was even now, as Connie passed in the car, being demolished. It was in perfect repair: till the war the Weatherleys had lived in style there. But now it was too big, too expensive, and the country had become too uncongenial. The gentry were departing to pleasanter places, where they could spend their money without having to see how it was made.
This is history. One England blots out another. The mines had made the halls wealthy. Now they were blotting them out, as they had already blotted out the cottages. The industrial England blots out the agricultural England. One meaning blots out another. The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical.

Within a year of Connie's last visit, it had happened. There stood Shipley Hall Estate, an array of red-brick semi-detached "villas" in new streets. No one would have dreamed that the stucco hall had stood there twelve months before.

But this is a later stage of King Edward's landscape gardening, the sort that has an ornamental coal-mine on the lawn.

One England blots out another. The England of the Squire Winters and the Wragby Halls was gone, dead. The blotting out was only not yet complete. What would come after? Connie could not imagine. She could only see the new brick streets spreading into the fields, the new erections rising at the collieries, the new girls in their silk stockings, the new collier lads lounging into the Pally of the Welfare. The younger generation were utterly unconscious of the old England. There was a gap in the continuity of consciousness, almost American; but industrial really. What next? (Lawrence 1928, p. 138 ff)

Dawn in Britain, in a street of no importance. The first colours of day, gray tinged with green, are by courtesy of fallout from a forest of chimneys; the glow of a cigarette denotes a human being.

At this time they pass each other, going from one side of the street to the other from shift to shift, from the side where they live to the side where they work, and back again a dozen hours later.

The Devitts live at 12, Eden Street, in Blackburn, a town said to have recovered from the industrial revolution and now diversified and prosperous and planned, say the City Fathers, who point with pride to its transplanted heart of concrete beehives and catwalks and one-way confusion which leads, unfortunately, to Eden Street.

Eden Street and all the streets that run like ribbons of barracks throughout industrial Britain are still the silent heartland of this country; and let there be no doubts about that.

Ron Devitt has steel grey hair. On his living room wall is a wedding picture taken thirteen years ago in which he looks like the boy he was. He might be fifty now. He is thirty-eight, with a peptic ulcer - "the dam hours and everything else, I suppose."

Like most factories in Britain, Singer's is simply a place of noise and confinement and mind-mashing boredom. There is also no sick pay.

Mrs. Ivy Littler stands at the next machine. "I'm really not anything: I'm only a machine hand," she says with a laugh. "What do I do here? I shave these little steel rods down to a point and I've no idea what happens to them then and I don't care."

It is dusk now and the wives are coming home from their work and the grey-green muck has dropped like a blind over the sun, making silhouettes of Ron Devitt's boys - Ronnie, who is twelve, and Stephen, two - as they play among the warring dogs and the litter and the broken bricks and the Daz packets in Eden Street's garden, beside the ink-black canal. "I'm going to join the Army when I'm ready!" proclaims Ronnie. "Why?" I ask. "That's the way to get away from here, isn't it?" He kicks a Pepsi tin, thinking. "You know, my dad says I'll be no better than him if I don't get away from here."
(Daily Mirror 1973)

At this juncture living and housing conditions in Great Britain can be the subject of a primary discussion which should be fuelled by the tactical employment of advertisements issued by British New Towns.(1) These illustrate the push and pull factors in the whole socio-economic situation of western man. The advertisements reappear regularly in British newspapers and are a relatively easily accessible source of material for teachers. The pros and cons of various advertisements with regard to their use in school leads to a fruitful discussion relating at one and the same time to content and method.

The emphasis can now be shifted to the methodological appraisal of team-work to build up a schematic representation of push and pull factors (2) and to the preparation of a debate for and against high-level housing. Jarman and Whybra have the following suggestions as to teaching methods:

A variety of teaching methods are offered through the presentation of the subject. For instance: group work for the advertisements in Chapter 1; team work for "The 3 Magnets" (p.23) *and for the "Take sides"*

debate (p. 37); *partner work for the dictionary definition* (p. 20); *team/partner work for the research projects* (p. 82) *and for the work-points* (p.91) . *Also a lot of scope has been given to creative activity to combat the reproduction effect that foreign language learning often has* (Jarman/Whybra 1982). (3)

Associated suggestions made by colleagues should be included (4) and new ideas evolved, e.g. silent impulses, visual aids and semantic fields. Further material should be adduced, e.g. extracts from the novel Late Call by Angus Wilson. (5) Here the generation gap aspect offers us a new perspective of New Towns.

As we are also dealing with teacher education, there are good grounds for offering a text from Orlando by V. Woolf (6) which dates from the same year as the introductory text from Lawrence and returns us to his themes, while using different imagery.
The visionary component in the work of Lawrence, Woolf and in that of the founders and furtherers of Garden Cities (7) and New Towns provides fine material for a more philosophical consideration of the whole complex which has been worked on and enables summaries and conclusions to be made.
This comprehensive and at the same time integrated approach to subject knowledge and applied pedagogy is intended to combat the vacuum or rather isolation that teachers are left in after conclusion of their studies (8).

Teachers must also be given methodological hints on how to find material and advice on how to use that material. An extract from Overload by Arthur Hailey (1978) illustrates the point.

As the door flew open, the trio rushed in.
Inside, against an interior wall some twenty-five feet away, three men were working. Afterwards Harry London would report with relish: 'If we'd mailed 'em a list, with specifications of how we'd like the evidence laid out, they couldn't have done better.'
An electric current transformer cabinet - installed, then looked by GSP & L - was open. Several transformer switches, it was discovered

later, had been opened, bound with insulating tape, then closed. The effect was to reduce electric meter recordings by a third. A few feet away a gas meter had an illegal bypass partially exposed. Supplies and tools for the work being done were spread around - insulated pliers, socket wrenches, lead disc seals and a mechanic's seal press (both stolen from GSP & L), and the transformer cabinet casing with a key - also stolen - in its lock.
Wineski announced in a loud, clear voice, 'We are police officers.' He ordered, 'Don't move! Leave everything where it is.' (...)

There was a pause in which three sets of handcuffs clicked. 'All right, Harry,' Wineski called over. 'Now tell us what all this stuff means.'
'It's the kind of solid evidence we've been looking for,' the Property Protection chief assured him. 'Proof of big-time electric and gas stealing.'
'You'll swear to that in court?'
'Sure will. So will others. We'll give you as many expert witnesses as you want.'
'Good enough.' (...)

'You'll remember,' London began, 'that soon after we caught those Quayle guys stealing power at the Zaco Building, I told you we'd uncovered a rat's nest. I predicted there was a lot more to come, and that some big names might be involved.'
Nim nodded.
'Try this big name on: Mr. Justice Paul Sherman Yale'.
Nim shot upright. 'You have to be kidding!'
'I wish I were,' London said dolefully. 'Unfortunately, I'm not.'

(pp. 270-172, 332)

Leisure-time fiction reading can be useful to illustrate that truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. The text excerpt can be set in connection with the newspaper article "Executive fiddled gas to heat his swim pool" to examine motives and morality.

A company director's gas meter was by-passed to cut the cost of heating his garden swimming pool.

Donald Bolt, 47, with business interests in house building and car sales, was said to have told a workman installing the pool: "I've paid for it long enough. I'll have something for nothing."
Robert Giles, the fitter who worked on the piping, told Rochford magistrates Bolt had agreed to a suggestion that the meter be by-passed.
The fitter's workmate, Michael Davies told the court:
"Bolt asked him to keep him out of it. He offered to pay any fine as well as a couple of bob on top."
Bolt, of Benfleet Road, Hadleigh, denied the fitter had suggested a meter fiddle.
He pleaded not guilty to stealing gas between April and December last year. He claimed: "I'm a man of substance, I would not have wanted to carry out this deception. It would not be worth my while."

"I did not know anything about it until the police and gas board called. When I asked Giles why he had done it, he told me he thought he would do me a favour."
But Bolt was found guilty of stealing £ 160 worth of gas. He was fined £ 100 with £ 20 costs. He has paid the gas board £ 250 to connect the pool to the meter and has paid for the gas he had stolen.
Mr. David Jeremiah, defending, said: "His conviction comes as a shattering blow considering his position in the community.
Even on the prosecution case it is obvious that Giles thought of the scheme and Bolt only agreed to it with some hesitation."
Giles, of Wilmslowe, Canvey, a fitter with a private firm, was fined £ 50 in January after admitting the offence.

(Evening Echo 1981)

The progression to the whole question of energy and the elements could be achieved by exhibiting the 4 posters "Earth", "Wind", "Fire" and "Water" which are now on general sale. (9)
The scope for finding and organising material to be used in task-based teaching would be considerable on an INSET course and colleagues should gain satisfaction from the wealth of topical material.

Topicality is not necessarily always a key criterion, it may just be a didactic aid. The poem 'I too' by Langston Hughes and excerpts from Second-class Citizen by Buchi Emecheta (1974) are not, for instance, so much designed to qualify as topical, but rather to be basic.

I too

I, too, sing America
I am the darker brother
They send me to eat in the kitchen
when compagny comes
but I laugh,
and eat well,
and grow strong.

To-morrow
I'll sit at the table
when compagny comes
nobody'll dare
say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen"
then

Besides, they'll see
how beautiful I am
and be ashamed, -
I, too, am America

Langston Hughes

Two weeks later, on the noticeboard in front of the post office at Queen's Crescent, she read on a blue card of a vacant room. There was no 'Sorry, no coloureds' on it. Adah could not believe her eyes. To make sure the room would be kept for them, she decided to phone the landlady as soon as she got to the library.
She knew that any white would recognize the voice of an African woman on the phone. So to eradicate that, she pressed her wide, tunnel-like nostrils together as if to keep out a nasty smell.
It was stupid of her though , because the landlady would find out eventually. She was simply counting on human compassion.
Yes, the two rooms were still available. Yes, she would keep the rooms for them. No, she did not mind children. She was a grandmother herself. She'd be very glad to have them, to keep her house alive.
It was all so friendly, so humane. But what would happen when the landlady was faced with two black faces? Adah told herself that it

would be better to postpone this discovery to the last minute. One could never tell, she consoled herself, the women might not even mind their being black. Second class citizen (pp. 80-81).

The problem of skin colour and of racial prejudice can then be tackled in a variety of ways, as these hints from a Teacher's Book accompanying a textbook on the subject show.

A variety of teaching methods are offered through the presentation of the subject. The arrangement of texts on pp. 19-20, 27-29, 34, 44-45 and 83-89 lends itself to group work with short reports or with subsequent plenum discussion. The material on the repatriation issue (pp. 23-26) is very appropriate for private study with a subsequent debate. Before dealing with the question of colour (p. 6) we suggest using twin silent blackboard impulses (black and white) to upgrade pupil involvement. Similarly the impulse slavery might be used before dealing with the material beginning on p. 48. For ambitious colleagues we believe that the material under SOME PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING (pp. 36-39) provides a unique opportunity for a dramatised documentary. As mentioned briefly in ZUR INHALTLICHEN PROGRESSION, chapters 4,5,6 and 7 may be considered as parallel projects for those colleagues short of teaching hours. Blackboard organisation by the pupils of the material on pp. 59-60 might be worthwhile for a clear characterisation of the Asians. Naturally the WORKPOINTS on p. 27 offer all sorts of possibilities for partner and work group. (Jarman/Whybra/Hase 1983)

Prof. Gerhard Neuner has spoken of "entering into new worlds through texts." By extension we could say thay our colleagues (and later their pupils) can enter into 'old' worlds through texts. Excerpts from Brighton Rock by Graham Greene (1938) and No Mean City by A. McArthur and H. Kingsley Long (1956) show the brutality that existed in western industrial society long before trashy American TV crime films or video existed.

The mob were enjoying themselves, just as he had always enjoyed himself. One of them leant forward to cut his cheek, and when he put up his hand to shield himself they slashed his knuckles again. He began

to weep, as the four-thirty went by in a drumbeat of hooves beyond the rail.
Then somebody from the stand shouted 'Bogies' and they all moved together, coming quickly at him in a bunch. Somebody kicked him on the thigh, he clutched a razor in his hand and was cut to the bone. Then they scattered as the police ran up the edge of the course, slow in their heavy boots, and he broke through them.

(Greene 1938, p. 106-107)

The manager began running across the floor with a shout of "No fighting here!" The big red-headed fellow stood transfixed with astonishment and gathering rage. Suddenly he came to life. He shook his girl from his arm and leapt at Razor King with a roar. Johnnie had no time to draw his weapons for the other's fist caught him a smashing blow between the eyes and felled him to the floor. That was the signal for the furious and bloody affray which followed immediately. Johnnie's "division" was out of its own district in this hall, a favourite haunt of the crowd from Townhead. Razors flashed and bottles were grasped as the Gorbals lads charged indiscriminately into battle. Mclatchie, the redhead, fought like a bull, but he was driven back from where Johnnie lay. The toe of an iron-shod boot laid open Johnnie's cheek, but he staggered drunkenly to his feet, only to be overwhelmed by the rush of Townhead lads to McLatchie's assistance.

(McArthur/Kingsley Long 1956, p. 108)

They also help us to put some apparently violent youth styles and subcultures into perspective. Existing phenomena can be explained (10) and the realisation that we are not dealing with a transitory sociopsychological problem may help future generations to find solutions.

"The value of literary texts does not result merely from their having been composed, but rather from their ranging among a typology of texts which should be established under the aspect of 'social relevance'" says Hermes. (Hermes 1979, p. 28). The decision whether to use certain texts or not in foreign language teaching should be taken according to

the social and therefore communicative relevance of those texts. Hermes continues: "Not only should those texts be chosen which take the assumed pragmatic needs of the pupils into account for their future everyday life, but also those which invite the children to grapple with the content and form their own opinions. Thus, for 11-16 year old pupils, it is precisely fictional texts which are communicatively relevant (in foreign language teaching)" (Hermes 1979, p. 28)

By extension we can transpose Hermes' argument to older pupils and even to teacher trainees. There remains a basic challenge, however, for INSET courses. The social and communicative relevance of texts to be used in foreign language teaching can only be established in a comprehensive approach which integrates the linguistic, literary, socio-cultural and methodological approaches.

Notes

1. See Jarman/Whybra 1982, Chapter I and Appendix.
2. See Jarman/Whybra 1982, p. 23 and Howard 1965.
3. cf. Jarman/Whybra 1982, Teacher's Book, p. 4.
4. cf. Baumann, K./Salzmann, I., Stadtplanung im Unterricht: Planen und Wohnen als Umwelterfahrung und soziales Verhalten: 6 Beispiele ästhetischer Erziehung, Köln, Dumont Schauberg,1974.

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   Piepho 1974, pp. 194-5 was already commenting ten years ago: "I have taken what appears to be an easy example from Chaplen's book (fig. 1). This plan should be shown on the OHP without the key and text.

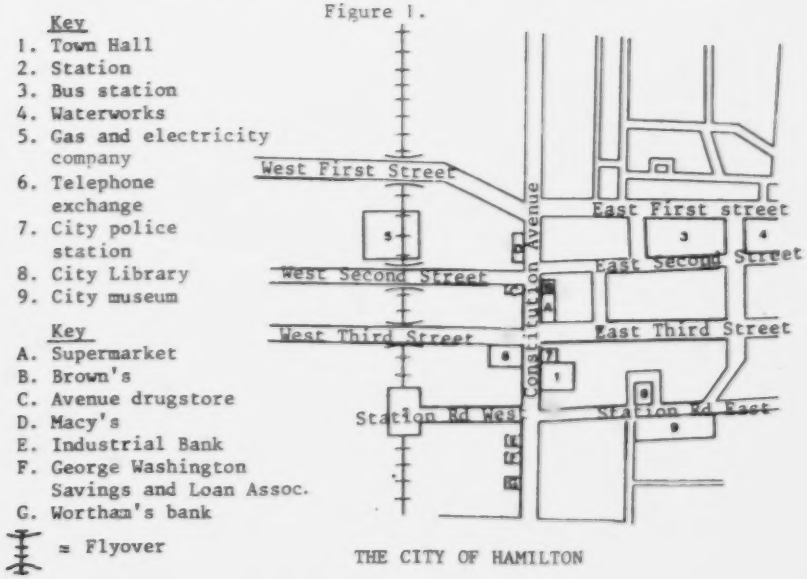
   Aim: the utterance of guesses and conclusions as in the following:

'That seems to be an American town. That seems to be the station. Number five could be another railway site, maybe a freight station. The large buildings - by way of comparison - must be department stores or large administrative premises. This part of the town is not indicative of any industry. I would associate this with a Midwestern town. The arrangement of the streets looks very mechanical!'

The key can now be given and the scope for utterances extended. More conclusions can be drawn: shopping district, economic heart, unusual position, bus and railway connections, rural hinterland etc.

After this introduction the pupils can progress to a first interpretation of town planning in their home town, enriched with data, pictures and any other information for which the appropriate lexical material and communicative structures must be assembled and employed".

Figure 1.



THE CITY OF HAMILTON

5. pp. 70-71, 140-143, 162-163
6. The end of Chapter 4 and the first few pages of Chapter 5 offer good material.
7. cf. Jarman/Whybra 1982, pp. 24 and 28 or Howard 1965.
8. cf. Edelhoff, C.: "Once formal qualifications have been achieved, teachers are left to themselves". (Stuttgart 1983)
9. Impulses may range from a picture of the sun drawn on the board to an article on wind farms in California from TIME or NEWSWEEK.
10. See Jarman/Whybra/Hase 1984, Chapter 4, "It all ends with a kick in the face."

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USING YOUR TEXTBOOK COMMUNICATIVELY

Wendy Scott Ninian Millar

Introduction

In the majority of situations, the textbook is a decisive factor in our teaching. We often feel that we have to follow the book, not least because there are parallel classes, there are examinations and there are other subjects to attend to.

Pupils (and parents) also feel that the book is there to be used, and often object if the teacher misses out exercises or does not read through the whole text with them. Of course, many of the modern textbooks are based on communicative-type principles and have lots of examples of communication exercises alongside the more traditional type of exercise. For teachers using this type of textbook communicative teaching is not a problem, but those who do have rather more

old-fashioned books can still get a tremendous amount of useful language work out of them, and language work of the type which may reasonably be called "communicative".

Communicative language teaching

Hand in hand with the idea of teaching communicative skills is the concept of student involvement. Though here we must beware of equating activity with involvement. If the pupils are not involved in this sense in what they are doing, then they might just as well be doing mechanical drills, so involvement and communication are interconnected and key concepts. Furthermore, if our teaching is to be communicative it also entails getting the pupils to use the individual learning strategies which they find most fruitful.
In the same way that activity does not necessarily equal involvement, teaching does not necessarily guarantee learning. What we are trying to get away from or suggest an alternative to, is the kind of strongly teacher-centred lesson where the teacher/pupils read a text, answer questions on it and then do exercises which are based on some language point in the text. We are not claiming that this kind of teaching is bad or that it should be done away with - we are simply trying a number of alternative ways of tackling texts and textsbooks which are based on structural principles.

Practical suggestions for teaching language communicatively

If we look first at the text itself: there are a number of techniques that we can employ before reading/listening to the text which can provide the pupils with a reason for reading the text other than in order to be able to answer the comprehension questions afterwards. Such techniques are not a guarantee of success, but your pupils are more likely to be involved in what they are doing if one varies the approach to the text and tries to give them something to do with

their language.

Here are some suggestions which have been tried out and which seem to work.

- If the story is short, give pupils the key words beforehand and ask them what they think the story might be. You can give them as many clues as you like, such as the title of the story, and ask them to work on their own for a very short time and then in groups of two or three. They don't have to tell you the whole story, but only the gist of it. They can then listen to the text or read it to see which group came closest to the actual story. Often of course, pupils's stories are better than that in the textbook, and then you can use them.

- Along similar lines, you can let them hear just snippets of the text and see if they can work out what it is about, who is involved. where it all takes place etc....

- You can split the text up and let different pupil(s) read or listen to different parts of the story, and then together they try to work out the complete text. There are different ways of organising this, either as a whole class or with the story being divided amongst a group, and you can do it with a whole story, or with a paragraph in the middle of a text.

- If you have the story in pictures for the pupils to retell what has happened, try using them before you read the text. Cut them up, hand them out to individual pupils in a group, ask them to describe their pictures to each other and then try to work out the story. Only after they think they have found the right order of the story are the pupils allowed to read/listen to it.

- And if you do have the story in pictures, which quite a few text-

books seem to have, you can put them on the overhead in a jumbled order and ask pupils to listen to the text and see if they can put the pictures in the correct order.

- If you only have one picture which illustrates the text then use that one on the overhead, but ask half the pupils to turn their backs to you so that they do not see it. The half of the class who can see the picture describe it to their partner, who has to try to draw a similar picture.
Obviously, the picture can be simplified and the task can be made easier. You can add items of vocabulary if necessary.
Having drawn the picture, the pupils are now *tuned in* to the text, and you can subsequently try to build up the story by asking questions about the picture - what they think it is about, who the people are etc.. It is remarkable how often pupils can actually "tell" the story before they have read it.

There are an endless number of activities like those mentioned here which can be used to involve the pupils in almost any text no matter how uninteresting the story may be or how unauthentic or stilted the language may be, and if you use this type of activity then it should not be necessary to ask the pupils comprehension questions afterwards - the activity in itself should ensure comprehension.

So far we have looked at what we have chosen to call the "pre-text" stage of the process. That is, what takes place before we allow the pupils to see the text. If we have managed to keep the pupils' interest up till now, we need to consider how to maintain it and make further use both of their interest and of the new language we have (hopefully) presented to them.

But first, having made all the preparations, we must, of course, read the text. Or must we? Do we need to? Probably yes, but how are we to do it? By getting the class to read it aloud in chorus, or by getting individuals to read parts aloud to the whole class or in groups?

No! This type of reading is in no sense communicative - and it is also a highly unnatural situation which only trains the pupils to read aloud (perhaps it does not even do that!) and few people, apart from teachers, politicians and newsreaders need that highly specialised skill.
The important thing, of course, is that the pupils do need to have practice in reading silently to themselves, and we suggest this is what we ask them to do. This need not take very long, and because we have already got the pupils to go through the story, we should not need to ask a lot of comprehension questions. However, it will obviously be in order for the teacher to invite the pupils to ask about anything in the text which they may be in doubt about. Similarly, the teacher may well choose to ask about one or two particular points in the text to focus the pupils' attention on them.
A third possibility - and one which encourages more pupil involvement is to get the pupils to ask the teacher or each other about points they do not understand. If they ask each other, this can encourage co-operation/communication between pupils and also help them to work out solutions together.

Having prepared for the text and read it, we now turn to the question of what communicative activities may follow.

- Find the Difference. The pupils write down their version of the story. The teacher then gets the class (as a whole or in groups or pairs) to compare their version of the story with the original one in the textbook.

- If the text is in the form of a dialoque, get the pupils to act it (provide them with props, hats etc. since it is much easier to 'be' someone if you dress up a bit). Do not let them read the dialoque from the book, and do not worry if they do not follow the original too exactly. Insistence on fidelity to the original will kill their interest.

- The teacher focuses the pupils' attention on some particular aspect of the (content of) the text and tries to relate it to the pupils' own lives. For example, a text on Guy Fawkes traditions in Britain, could be a lead in to a discussion of similar traditions in the pupils' own country.

- Linear extension (1) Pupils are asked to continue the story of the text (in pairs or groups) and then perhaps to get together in groups to tell their extended story to each other, or perhaps to compare their stories.

- Linear extension (2) The pupils write "the next chapter" of the story/text.

- Linear extension (3) The pupils in groups list the key words of their "next chapter" and then challenge another group to write the text using the key words.

- Lateral extension (1) The teacher puts the pupils in groups or pairs and gets one in each group/pair to play a role which does not exist in the text. For example, a nosey neighbour asking questions about an event described in the text.

- Lateral extension (2) The pupils write a postcard or letter from the 'nosey neighbour' (see previous suggestion) to a friend.

- The pupils write messages giving instructions or asking questions which in turn have to be answered in writing by another pupil. For example, if the text has been about a party, the pupils can write invitations to each other which would then have to be accepted or declined in writing.

- The teacher sets his pupils a cloze type exercise either taken directly from the text or based on it.

Conclusion

We have made only a limited number of suggestions here, and have deliberately chosen to exclude the more traditional type of closely controlled exercise which is to be found in most textbooks and which, of course, still has its uses for practising the mechanics of a foreign language. We have also tried to confine ourselves to types of activity which require a minimum of preparation by the teacher.

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PRIMARY ENGLISH AND A COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

W.N. de Jong

Why should one opt for a communicative approach with young beginners? I would like to suggest, because this approach is most likely to build up and keep up the motivation of the learners. Young learners appreciate achieving goals. A communicative approach with its recognisable and worth-while short term objectives is therefore more suitable for the young learner than most other syllabuses. Dangling the proverbial carrot of future success before the young learner's eyes obviously does not work very well.

In the following I shall deal with questions such as what young beginners, what communicative approach, given these, what objectives, what conclusions to draw as regards teaching materials and didactics, and offer a few concluding remarks regarding the training of teachers.

The Dutch parliament have decided that from September 1986 onwards all primary schools will teach English in the two final years i.e. in classes 5 and 6. The age-group concerned is about 10 to 12 years old. In Piaget's scheme of cognitive development this means that the learners, generally speaking, are finishing the concrete-operational stage and starting the formal-operations period. "The concrete operations period is characterized by the child's development of internalized, reversible operations which can be applied to attributes of objects to solve problems. The period of formal operations, which an adult may not necessarily complete, is characterized by truly hypothetical thinking as found in formal logic and scientific reasoning." (Bourne, Dominowsky & Loftus, p. 333).
This psychological jargon means that the child in the concrete operations stage has learned that you can change some attributes of an object while leaving others unchanged, e.g. altering a ball of clay into a sausage-shape leaves its weight and its clay-ness intact. Also, this child has some notion of "relationship", e.g. understands a concept like subordination, or that objects may belong to the same class. In the following phase the child will develop abstract thinking, learn to construct a hypothesis and test it systematically.
There are a few points that need emphasising in connection with the above as to behavioral characteristics. Piaget's taxonomy is an approximation, i.e. no actual child of eleven will actually experience the transition from one stage into the other. We are speaking about a process where a child gradually loses the typical attitudes to learning associated with one and adopt the approaches linked with the other stage of development.

Learning language, be it mother-tongue or second language, is assumed to be species-specific and is part of general cognitive development. Psychologically speaking, it would create theoretical problems to treat language acquisition and cognitive development as separate systems functioning in the developing brain. The ability to learn to interact with one's environment using increasingly complex cognitive skills

may well be a peculiarly human endowment. Learning a second language can therefore logically find a place within the Primary School curriculum. A condition following from this point of view is that the subject is taught by the class-teacher (the decision adopted in the new law governing Primary Education in the Netherlands).
This approach has important consequences for the development of language teaching materials, which I shall discuss further on.

A Communicative approach

The problem with this term is that it has different meanings for different people. Rather than open the discussion on what such an approach should ideally imply, I shall state my views in terms of a language teaching curriculum, and assume that the implementation of such a curriculum will quite naturally include a variety of situations in which "social" learning can be practiced.
In essence, a communicative approach, using a notional/functional analysis of the learner's needs for its basis, will teach the learner to behave appropriately in a number of everyday settings.
The place of English in the Dutch context is probably unique in a number of ways. Children hear English daily in the public media - popular songs are mostly sung in English by Dutch, English or American or.... groups; TV-serials are generally subtitled on Dutch TV and not dubbed; all over the Netherlands English-language radio programmes can be received, and television-broadcasts in increasingly large areas of the country. English loanwords and phrases are quite common in everyday language use. The English language is therefore recognized as a normal vehicle of communication by all.
Given the usefulness of knowing English in this context, it follows that young learners will want to adopt this language as part of their everyday experience. This acceptance of English is further stimulated by a preference for short-term goals, which is characteristic of the attitude to learning of this age-group.
On the other hand there are the long-term requirements of the educational system: that all pupils upon fulfilling their compulsory edu-

cation shall be "able to survive, linguistically speaking, as tourists in a foreign country, or in contacts with foreign visitors to their own country", (van Ek, p.2). The specifications of The Threshold Level have been generally accepted in the Netherlands as proper for all learners who leave the system at the age of sixteen. On the basis of this clear preference for communication goals I am in favour of a notional/functional syllabus for the primary school.

Using such a syllabus the Dutch Foundation for Curriculum Development has conducted an experiment in teaching English to Primary School children, as a follow-up of an earlier one using a structural syllabus. The results of this experiment are widely available in a number of publications in the Dutch language.
The topic-areas used in the above experiment were personal identification, the classroom, house and home, hobbies and free time, pets, shopping (for chothes), travel, food and drink and television. The language functions taught were mainly those developed in Waystage English (van Ek, et al., 1977): imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes, expressing and finding out emotional attitudes, expressing moral attitudes, getting things done and socializing.
Clearly the English taught in this project aimed at teaching the foreign langage for use at home, or on holiday in other countries rather than in the British Isles . There is much to be said for this approach since the number of Dutch people that yearly takes a holiday in Great Britain is relatively small. Consequently the chances of meeting native speakers of English outside their natural environment are much greater.
The foundation for Curriculum Development has suggested objectives for English language teaching in the primary school. These concern (1) the positive attitude learners should adopt towards learning a foreign language, (2) awareness of the role of the English language in Dutch society both in the social and the cultural sphere, and (3) levels of achievement in speaking, listening, reading and writing. These are

then worked out in terms of notions one can express in certain contexts. Examples are given of exponents that might be used, or what types of authentic texts the learner may be able to cope with. An important footnote is added concerning the use that can be made of these objectives: they should not be understood as statements about levels of competence, and should not be used to select pupils for the various types of secondary education (which says more about the quality of secondary than of primary education).

Requirements of Teaching materials

Children in the age range concerned will experience the onset of puberty usually before they move on to secondary education. "The way of life of a ten-year-old is normally harmonious and well balanced, and (....) this well-integrated pattern is broken up in the twelfth giving way to uneasiness and anxiety." (Sandström, p.220). The same source says "... the integrated personality of the ten-year-old child points forward to adaptation to the world of grown-ups. (.....) the child of ten is very receptive to social and cultural influences. He often has considerable social intelligence....." (p. 62). Bourne, Dominowsky & Loftus in their discussion of cognitive development draw attention to factors such as memory span - "Memory tasks place greater demands on attention, and younger children might 'remember worse' because they attended less well in the first place" (p. 313)-, rehearsal strategies - "the older child (and adult) is more likely to rehearse and to construct larger chunks by using a cumulative rehearsal strategy" (p. 315) -, organisation - "older children are much more likely to use a grouping strategy (e.g. when learning a categorized word list), spontaneously" (p. 317) than younger children. Older children perceive causality better than younger ones and understand adult explanations easier (cf. p.329).

Concerning language acquisition the writers have this to say: "Children typically understand more about language than is apparent in the speech they themselves produce. As language development proceeds,

children appear to move from a receptive phase to a more productive phase; this transition appears to depend on the development of cognitive skills which are not well understood at this time". (p. 334)
It seems clear from this that language teaching materials may look forward to a life in the adult world. They can make use of the child's social and cultural insights, although tasks along those lines may overtax his reasoning powers. Materials should be recycled regularly in order to allow the building up of chunks of knowledge: i.e. the same language materials should be presented in novel situations regularly. Also, they should not tax the learner's memory span overmuch ; obviously, to prevent dropping out.
This, of course, influences the choice of texts a teacher might wish to offer his pupils, and also of exercises, activities, etc., he might wish to use. In general, one might say that perhaps the teacher's best approach might be lots of short bursts of a variety of activities around short texts.
Apart from the traditional texts found in textbooks nowadays such as dialogues, short monologues, narratives, etc., which might, hopefully, "convey a real message of some sort" (Morrow 1977), I would like to see extensive use made of other authentic materials such as (nursery) rhymes, riddles, songs, cartoons, advertising texts, etc. The trouble is that so often textbooks are needlessly restrictive, when there is so much available.
In the field of devising exercise material the spirit of adventure also is notably absent from most textbooks. One finds endless drills, sometimes disguised as dialogue exercises, sometimes as games, but real communication is often absent. All too often the textbook writer confronted with a lack of ideas escapes into a writing exercise which repeats the drills already presented. There is no problem as to the presentation of these materials. All textbooks for the primary school are attractively produced; my criticism concerns the contents .
The best textbooks nowadays fortunately offer more and better texts, communication exercises, etc. The view of language presented, however, might well be called materialistic, since basically it is all aimed at

understanding the text, reproducing it and finally integrating its "patterns" into the learner's competence. Even the best-devised information gap exercise or built-in disagreement game often only aims at developing communicative ability on the level of exchanging "technical" information. "Perhaps, to emancipate signals from immediate emotional impulse, the stimulus of discussing technical matters was necessary. But now we may hope to use the subtlety and power of language for true communication about our emotions" (Russell & Russell, p. 191).

Of course, I do not wish to discard what has been achieved as a preparation for "discussing technical matters" in a foreign language. I wish to make a plea for the development of exercises to train "true communication about our emotions" and for the inclusion of such in FLT materials.

For many years now people have been aware of non-verbal features of language use in face to face interaction. Whole new fields of study, such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, ethno-methodology, the ethnography of speaking, have been developed to study the more social aspects of communication. The translation of the discoveries made in these fields into language teaching methodology is a slow process, but it is taking place. There is the work of Alan Maley, Alan Duff and their colleagues, who have published collections of materials for the training of listening comprehension, oral skills, reading and writing which all make use of well-known Gestalt-like tendencies of humans to stimulate communication. There are the materials produced by Colin Mortimer to train the perception and production of rhythm and intonation; and the ideas developed by Bryan Jenner and Barbara Bradford. There is the work discussed by Philip Riley (1980) on the use of television to develop an awareness of the problems inherent in face to face interaction across linguistic boundaries; the discussion on the use of television in various language teaching publications (e.g. Schwartz 1983).

There is all this going on, but very little of it is found in textbooks for beginners so far. The problem is that virtually all the writers mentioned are concerned with the teaching of post-intermediate and ad-

vanced learners of English as a foreign language. It is about time that textbook writers for beginners picked up the message.

So, having made this point, what do I wish to find in a coursebook for 10-12 year-old children? It should contain a large variety of text-types and exercises, which on the one hand build up the learner's linguistic competence and on the other sharpen his paralinguistic awareness, perhaps both consciously and subconsciously. The learner at this stage is now at an age where he may appreciate and understand formal explanations and rules, although obviously this should not be overemphasised.

The aim is to build up communication: therefore the work at this beginning level should start from reception and lead to production through a series of carefully organised exercises (see: Candlin 1981). At this level it would perhaps not matter overmuch if actual production does not yet go beyond the use of "routines and patterns", i.e. the standardized phrases learnt from the dialogues used as input-material. It is very important however that the learner gains insight in his own analytical powers as soon as possible. Real communication, even if only observed or heard, offers so many possibilities to gain insights into motives, relationships, roles, settings, and so on, that it would be wasteful not to try and put the learner's intuitions about these things to work while he is mastering a foreign language.

There should be much diversity of activities in the class, particularly of those lasting a short time with an eye to the shorter memory span of the children. Also, the linguistic content should be recycled regularly to aid its retention in the learner's long-term memory. As much as possible, activities should be physical, with lots of singing, acting, moving about, etc., and at the same time require the cooperation of other children, be it the whole class or smaller groups. This, by the way, will not present serious difficulties in the Dutch primary school, as most teachers regularly use groupwork activities these days anyway.

How to prepare the teachers?

Teacher training in the Netherlands is traditionally separated into preparing for a career in the primary and in the secondary field. Primary teacher training does not yet, and did not in the past, include English in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the new Education Law requires that English is taught by the class teacher (and consequently not by an outsider, subject-teacher).

Various programmes have been set up to provide for in-service training of the teachers. Most of these contain a language skills component, and a methodology and didactics part. Since the government has an obvious responsibility for the quality of these programmes, it takes an interest in the financing and content of these. It has therefore made money available to set up a centrally controlled multi-media course for the teaching of English in the Primary School. This involves the use of radio and television (5 hours each in 10 broadcasts of 30 minutes), a follow-up by various teacher training institutions (both primary and secondary) of 20 hours, and 10 hours set aside for private study.

Although every primary school teacher has been taught English (for about 5 years on an average), there is no reason to assume that they still have a command of English sufficiently error-free to be able to act as a model for their learners. Will twenty hours suffice to recall their former fluency (if any) and at the same time make them aware of new developments in modern language teaching which they may totally unaware of? It seems to me that for most teachers this amount of time will be absolutely insufficient. The only alternative seems to be to develop courses that are teacher-proof, and perhaps this is what the government hopes for in these impecunious days. But, if time and money are only minimally available, how can one expect teachers to accept programmes based on a methodology they are totally unfamiliar with? What might seem an advantage perhaps, is that the teachers are thoroughly familiar with the learners they are going to teach English, not only from a theoretical point of view, but also definitely in a practical sense. This familiarity is an advantage when it comes to

the selection of teaching materials . The disadvantage lies in the fact that, traditionally, language teaching theory has paid scant attention to findings in the field of the psychology of learning and teaching. Consequently, much of the textbook market is filled with materials showing, in varying degrees, weaknesses in a number of directions. Will primary school teachers be able to adapt textbooks to their own requirements? And who is going to show them how to go about this job?

Perhaps there is scope for initiatives on the part of teacher training establishments for secondary education, which have an interest in didactic and methodological continuity in the teaching of English. Past experience predicts disaster unless measures are taken to guarantee the continuity.

Fortunately many primary school teachers do realise their shortcomings and lack of preparation for the job ahead. They flock in large numbers to courses offering to give them this much-needed training. Perhaps, in due time English in the primary school curriculum will be taught on the basis of a communicative approach: the teachers are willing, but lack sufficient competence at this time; coursebooks are being produced, but those that aim at being teacher-proof are mainly structure-based; the pupils are very enthusiastic and keen to learn. Let's hope that the system manages to keep this motivation alive.

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VIDEO SEQUENCES AND CREATIVITY IN COMMUNICATIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

David Whybra & Jerg Prinzing

In the winter semester of 1980/81 the Department of English at the Hochschule Hildesheim ran a course entitled 'Teaching English'. This course was designed along co-operative lines involving the participation of all the teaching staff and a large group of students. The aim of the course was to set up criteria by which lessons could be professionally observed and judged. The behaviour of pupils and teachers in filmed lessons available at that time on the open market was to provide a basis for developing criteria.

Our team very soon came to the unexpected but unanimous conclusion that the filmed lessons were inappropriate - they had been overtaken by developments in foreign language learning and teaching - and could at most serve as a warning to future teachers. It should be noted, however,

that they had originally been conceived as serious examples of good teaching. Sic transit gloria!

Unfortunately, it was not practicable in terms of staff time and finance to make our own films, so we turned to video. With relatively little effort and at reasonable expense it is possible for amateurs to produce good recorded materials with video and we believed this offered us the chance of achieving our aims. We soon discovered that the further production of conventional model lesson material for teacher training would be much inclined to a theoretical occupation with educational problems. We tended more to practical methodology and to an applied psychology approach. Video seemed to be the ideal medium for our purposes.

We thus began in that course to film our own kernel situations on video with our students and have not looked back since. The video sequences contained interaction in everyday situations. They were intended to further the language ability of the students and at the same time to dovetail into the professional language teacher training involving didactics and methodology. We hoped no less that through observation (meaning self-observation) and subsequent self-awareness we would help the students to modify their language and teaching behaviour within the professional dimension in a fashion conducive to communicative language teaching.

It is our considered opinion that language acquisition for our students in their dual role as learners and future language teachers must be fun and so motivate them for the further steps in their training.
With relatively minimal and simple preparations we have attempted to create different situations which may well occur in the normal run of the lives of the pupils of our future teachers. We laid great emphasis upon spontaneity in our teaching aims but did not automatically expect this of our students. We rather relied on our methodology to create openings for spontaneity, as this methodology could then be passed on among teachers wanting to work communicatively. The improvisation towards which we were thus also consciously working did mean that the

contributions of individual participants were sometimes unavoidably spectacular or inappropriate. On the whole, we considered this to be a positive development, inasmuch as the participants increasingly felt more at ease and were enjoying their work.
We observed that the situations became longer and more complex as the term progressed; sometimes they were extremely funny and at other times a small element of artificiality crept in. They did, however, yield an enormous amount of language production, both of a creative character and of a practical habitualising nature.
The students were quite happy with their "acting" and were additionally motivated when reviewing their performance on the subsequent replay. They were motivated not only to continue this work but to try out new material and vary what they had already done. These first simple steps in producing video sequences to support and further language acquisition served to engender and harness creativity in the language learning process. We were and still are of the opinion that this work cannot be started too soon during the course of studies.

In our partner university, Jordanhill College, Glasgow, foreign language teacher training employs video from the very start, asking students to do some micro-teaching (group size max. 12) in their first course week! Technical perfection is not called for and a minimum of equipment is used.

Wiese also reports "that for learning processes involving the medium of video the technical side need not be perfect" and cites the example of a school in Nienburg on the River Weser (12-14 yrs-old children): "The project named 'Where has the register gone?' revealed the creativity and enjoyment that come to light when children grapple with the medium of video (1)." Boeckmann comments that "the routine employment of communication media in the classroom is extremely important for open teaching (2)" (eds. note: open = not consciously authoritarian-based).

By contrast, an informal survey showed that in the second phase of teacher training (school-based for 1½ years) the medium of video is hardly used at all for the observation and training of foreign language teachers.

We were able, however, to extend our experiments to our student counsellor teachers, to former students, to the participants of national and international congresses and to other teacher training students in the state of Lower Saxony who were unknown to us. The favourable reaction to our research activities and the positive results obtained by other colleagues have encouraged us to continue with our work. We observed especially increased self-confidence on the part of our students when teaching, a higher level of readiness to speak the foreign language on all occasions and, in individual cases, encouraging modifications of character and behaviour.

Video sequences and creativity in communicative foreign language learning

Self-made video recordings which are intended for use as a teaching medium to improve communicative competence in foreign language lessons should today be beginning to play just as important a role as audio-visual courses have been doing for the last 35 years. The great interest shown by children in TV, video and video games will certainly primarily have a favourable influence. Fifteen years ago pop songs took on a similar motivational function in English Language Teaching in German schools and they have now assumed an appropriate position in didactics and taken on an interesting role in methodology.
The replay and freeze facilities can be used for correcting "mistakes", for giving praise, for renewed enjoyment, and, of course, for the variation, extension and perhaps even simplification of the sequences according to need and degree of prowess. Enormous gains in language skills and knowledge are to be obtained through speaking, listening and watching when the participants are actively involved in video work (3). Added to the reward of the action replay, we find that the high absolute participation rate of the pupils and the possible variation of their participation can increase the level of motivation. We speak of reward above because the pupils see themselves on the screen in action and interaction and experience language acquisitional and behavioural reinforcement. The knowledge that "mistakes" can be erased should suf-

fice to avoid inhibition. We work on the premise that no teacher would sink to "blackmailing" the pupils with the video tapes. The modest amount of props required, for instance, tables, chairs, bags, coats, writing materials etc. are on hand in every classroom.
Even the school laws in Lower Saxony support the educative aspect of such self-made productions. Pupils are required in Paragraph 2 of our School Law "to obtain information and learn how to deal with it critically". We may thus see secondary aims in helping the children to resist the manipulative possibilities in programme production and to gain insight into the suggestive, consumption-oriented techniques of commercial television.

Our research was to be bound to everyday reality, having the global aim of furthering communication in everyday situations. We saw openings for this work in school, in adult education and in universities. We estimate that there may also be many gratifying possibilities for working with under-achievers in school.

Several observers have commented that the technical equipment is now already available in a surprisingly high number of schools. It is reliable equipment and very simple to operate. We believe that teachers are not attempting to use video cameras frequently enough to become sure in their handling and thus provide us with recorded material which could be exchanged to mutual advantage. Progress will remain restricted as long as we are not able to mutually criticise and correct our experimental work.

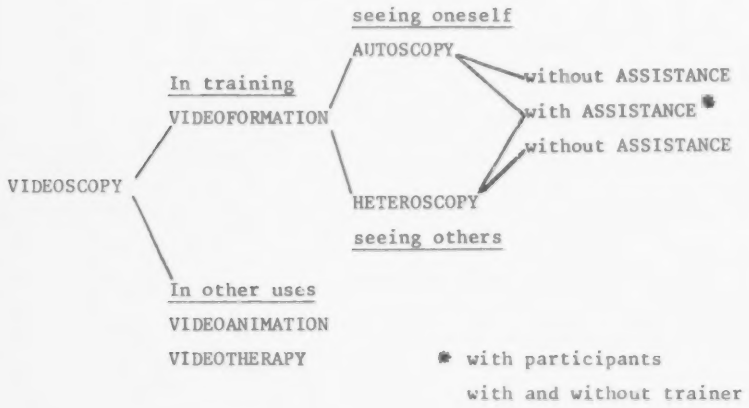
Psychological components

We noted initially the function of video as a medium for observation (self-observation). In contrast to many colleagues in the field of didactics, we are not directly aiming at analysing "lessons" given by and with students participating in this work during their teacher training. "Tear up the balance-sheet of lesson aims" commented H.E. Piepho in 1983 (4). By making self-observation and self-awareness possible, we would like to favour modifications of behaviour which lead to re-

duction of anxiety and insecurity and promote the pragmatic use of language, mimicry and gestures. Those communicative measures which uphold and further the understanding between communicating partners should be practised, for instance, corroboration (not teacher echo), enlarging upon a point, provocation, teasing and even expressions of incredulity, disbelief and annoyance.
We should like to see teachers and student teachers sure in their use of language and in their classroom actions. For pupils it is perhaps the motivational aspect of video work that is most important.

Video as a medium

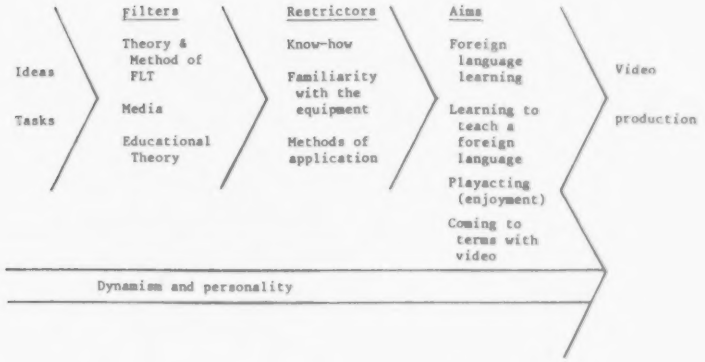
The following diagrammatic representation of video as a medium indicates some of its manifold uses:



Source: ATEE 1982 (5)

Wiese has spoken of the (inter)active video camera in the context of fully realising its potential: "Interaction using the equipment means, with regard to the technical application of video, that the content of recordings may be exchanged as communications between two or more (groups of) addressees. The communications will convey information to

the partners and will invite or provoke an answer or reaction. Video interaction goes beyond the accustomed one-way communication of TV; it can, for example, consist of two groups of children in a class making different statements on the same theme or two groups of students may experiment with divergent teaching approaches and then discuss them. Further developments will go beyond the individual institution or group and will include a medium-oriented correspondence between schools, hopefully across frontiers and language barriers" (6).
Our didactic model takes the following form:



Video sequences in the training of foreign language teachers

Our starting point lay in the playing-out of situations which occur continuously - in one way or another - after landing in an English-speaking country, although not necessarily with that geographical restriction.
It was theoretically clear beforehand that the speech items which are needed in all sorts of (mini-)situations do, in fact, occur in a basi-

cally small group of macro-situations, e.g. At the customs
At the Travel Agency
Waiting in a Queue
At the Bank
At the Restaurant
In the Waiting-room (7).

We began with situations involving a small group of participants, but, after news of our escapades reached other students, we were having to manage groups of thirty! The progressive increase in the number of participating students enabled us to diversify our play-acting activities considerably. People not directly involved at the nuclei of situations, who subsequently became known as "life-savers", were able to broaden the scope of the action spontaneously and introduce fresh, but associated topics with additional lexical items. In the situation "At the Customs", for example, several people would get quite involved if a traveller was being victimised. People pushing in would get a ticking-off, opinions in the waiting-queue would be passed and customs officials chose a very careful path indeed between diplomacy and authority, all the the while calming the impatient members of the queue.

The participants soon generated their own communicative impulses and our fears that students might 'hide' in the group or that individuals might govern the scene were for the most part dispelled. Organisationally we had initially used the technique of employing advanced students to get the ball rolling and we would defend this measure as an acceptable instrument of group dynamics which can soon be regelated to a very minor consideration.

Our experience was similar in other areas, e.g. props and 'distractors'. We had originally taken a lot of trouble to procure prospectuses, office materials, the realia of past trips to Britain and the US and had even 'forged' currency, thus inadvertently conceiving a 'dramaturgy through props! We even brought cabin trunks into the college! It soon transpired that these objects d'art were accepted, but not at all regarded as particularly necessary by the students. They were quite prepared to get along with far less material and with minimal preparation, for instance,

gold and silver medallions, airline timetables to Haiti and Tahiti, mix-ups over names on tickets, lost umbrellas, ambiguous phone calls etc. We were soon able to leave this aspect to the initiative of the students and believe that a similar situation would arise in school. First attempts had, however, shown the necessity of 'life-savers' and 'sheet-anchors'. In case somebody really was at loss for words, we developed language impulses which helped to dodge the issue, throw up a smoke-screen or put an alternative plan into action. The students would thus not need to fall back on to their native tongue (8). We learned to call for 'Miss Jones' and soon a certain 'Mr Stevens' appeared. On the telephone we were able to interject:

- "Excuse me, it's a bad line, could you speak up?"
- "Excuse me, it's a bad line, could you repeat that?"
- "Sorry, I can't hear you, there's a drill outside, can you ring back?"
- "Call me back in an hour, please."

Whe then discovered that written or printed aids were also of great help in this function:

At the customs: A warning about importing flowering plants and smuggling animals, (rabies etc.)

In the Restaurant: a menu

At the Bank : filling out a form.

Numerous comments, questions, answers, reactions to those questions and answers and fetching third parties for further information enabled a good flow of communication. Our own signs, posters and pictures were a very useful and easily produced orientation.

Conclusion and perspectives

Taking on roles, play-acting and enjoying language activity had thus come to the forefront in our course and (self-)observation had become secondary, although not dispensable. The use of video had become a psychologically stabilising factor. We argue that this factor derives from the wish of the participants to achieve behavioural modification during recording. After recording they are potentially able to confirm themselves their own flexibility and developmental capacity. Video may thus be

used appropriately for the aims in language teacher training which we outlined ab initio. The parallel use of textbook and of pupil-produced video sequences may be envisaged for the future. Comparable productions are viable in adult education (9) as auxiliaries and variables for foreign language acquisition, practice and production. Relevant research at the level of adult learners regarding video sequences and learning English as a lingua franca would be desirable.
Behind the taxonomy of learning that leads to speech acts and communicative competence we see the task-based approach which we define as insight by the learner through his (speech) actions into language competence and performance. The use of video guarantees the possibility of this insight through self-observation. For future language teachers we consider the not so spontaneous possibility of insight to be extremely valuable for the foundation of a professional attitude to communicative foreign language teaching.

The reader is referred to the following Appendix for an illustrative example of video-work in communicative foreign language teaching.

Appendix

The following excerpts from the record of one video sequence, listing functions , lexis, roles and the number of participants may serve as an example of the work involved.

At the Customs

Have you anything to declare, Sir/Madam?
May I have a look at....?
May I see?
What is this?
What is it?
What's that?
Did you buy the .... in ....?
Will you please open/shut the/your case/bag?

Please stand/wait here.
Show me your...., please.
Stop there, please.
Just a moment, please.

You're not allowed to ....
There are no ..... in my case/bag.

Excuse me.
I'm sorry!
It was an accident!
You fool!
I beg your pardon.

I don't know.
I can't explain it.
I don't understand.
It's not mine.
Yes/no, I bought it in ...
It only cost £.....

You are, are you?

I can, can't I?

Roles: travellers, customs men, smugglers, cleaner, pusher-in, immigration officials, policemen.

Production team: three people.

Props: cases, bags, coats, contraband: packets of tea, bottles, cigarette packets. Two people.

Camera: one person.

Sound: one person.

Lenght of sequence: four minutes.

Notes

1) Wiese, J.G. : Video in der Schule, in Videografie 4, 1981, p. 211.
2) Boeckmann, K., lecture: Wie können Medien offenen Unterricht fördern?; 20 gpi-Symposium, 10- 12-3-1982 in Hannover, Theme: "Bildung am Bildschirm".
3) Advantages: Jane Revell has noted the following positive features of using video:
   - immediate applicability (motivation for the usefulness of what one has just learnt)
   - ersatz true-to-life
   - extensive illustration (lecture: Video im Englischunterricht, 23-9-83, Hannover).
4) Piepho, H.E. : in an aside during a lecture, 10 Arbeitstagung der Fremdsprachendidaktiker, Aachen, 9- 12-10-83.
5) Association for Teacher Education in Europe, 51 rue de la Concorde, 1050 Bruxelles (ATEE); Standing Working Group on Audio-Visual methodology in teacher training: "The Training of Teachers in and by the use of Audio-Visual Methods", group paper, 1982.
6) Wiese, J.G., in an abstract of his lecture: Korrelat zum Bildschirm: Die (inter)aktive Videokamera. Versuch einer Übersicht über den Stand der Videoarbeit in Schule und Hochschule, 20. gpi-Symposium, 10- 12-3-82, Hannover, Theme: "Bildung am Bildschirm", Advance publication, p. 106. See also the work and publications of Carol Lorac and Michael Weiss in connection with their project "Cultural

and language Audio Visual Exchange", Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer, Sussex BN 1 9PH, England.

7) Cf. A Ticket to Talking, Kamp Verlag; Table of contents: -Model Dialogue - Language functions; and see: Das VHS Zertifikat Englisch, DVV, 1977, p. 25-35.

8) CF. Eppeneder, Ralf, lecture: Der Stellenwert authentischer, interaktiver Sprache für den Fremdsprachenunterricht, 14. Jahrestagung der GAL, 29.9.- 1.10.83. Duisburg.
Eppeneder does not consider learner activity in this context to be arbitrary and recommends the anticipation of speech acts together with the preparation of their formulation. This precautionary attitude then becomes less pronounced with the progress of the learners.

9) Cf. WELCOME, Hueber Verlag.

STUDENT-CENTRED TESTING: ASSESSING COMMUNICATION IN PROGRESS

Andrew Harrison

This article starts from a platitude: that teaching procedures and assessment procedures depend on each other. Tests should in theory look like a further application of a suitable learning method, not appear at the end of a learning process as elements in an alien system of value judgements. A coherent method of language teaching makes assumptions about a theory of learning, and these assumptions are reflected in its test procedures. The view that communication is the main aim of language learning assumes that working with examples of language used in a context, followed by progressively more complex applications, is a more valuable procedure than either description of a structural framework followed by ways of filling it out (the grammar/translation system), or the demonstration of a pattern followed by practice with vari-

ations on it (the audio-lingual or audio-visual system). Tests resulting from the former approach ask students to process language according to the rules they have learnt, by translating to and from the foreign language, writing various kinds of essay, responding in an oral interview, reading aloud and writing from dictation. In each case the assessment system invites error and then penalises it when it occurs. The audio-lingual or -visual approaches lead to 'discrete point' tests which build up a picture of the student's skills like a mosaic from a large number of individual assessments, each testing a particular sound, structure or item of vocabulary. The basis for judging a student's success in this case is statistical probability established experimentally with trial versions of the tests. A third assessment procedure, which can fit both these theories of learning but is applied differently depending on which theory is adopted, is to offer the student a stretch of language and ask him to interpret the text in some way, or to put him in a situation and ask him to produce relevant language for these predetermined circumstances. Examples of the former kind of assessment are tests of listening and reading comprehension based on passages, cloze and dictation. Examples of the latter are tests of controlled writing (e.g. letters), oral narratives based on pictures series, and role plays.

These are brief descriptions of the three trends in testing labelled by Spolsky (1978) 'pre-scientific', 'psychometric-structuralist' and 'integrative-sociolinguistic', and characterized by Morrow (1979) as the Garden of Eden, the Vale of Tears and the Promised Land. The categories, whatever label is attached to them, are somewhat arbitrary because there are some elements which are common to all, depending on the point of view of the test writer, but they are helpful because they indicate the links which exist between teaching strategies and the corresponding principles for assessment. For the present discussion they provide a context for asking the question: What are the principles for assessment which follow on from a communication approach to language teaching and learning? But before considering any answers, an important distinction must be made between the association of teaching technique

with testing technique and the relationship between a testing technique and the reason for using it. One particular testing format may be appropriate for a number of different assessments: for example the dictation can be useful in any of the three approaches, depending on how it is constructed (words, sentences or passages); administered (teacher reading aloud or tape of authentic speech); and marked (by error, by sense groups or by single words restored to gaps in a written version of the text).

A communicative approach to teaching and learning assumes that the most important principle for deciding what should be learnt is the use of language in realistic contexts. When the tests mentioned above are looked at from a point of view of the student taking them, it becomes clear that very few of them require him to act as a language user in a real-life situation. The only possibilities are role play, letter writing and, for those whose livelihood may depend on it, translation from the foreign language. But real life is an impossible criterion for testing because a test is always to some extent a simulation. A real test of communicative performance might involve something like sending the student from London to Edinburgh with ten pence. If he reaches Edinburgh within a given time limit he has passed the test because he must have communicated successfully to get there: if he disappears somewhere in the Midlands he has failed. This kind of operational version of assessment cannot work however, even if more realistically set up. There are far too many extraneous factors which have nothing to do with communication (like luck, the weather, and above all the character of the student), and what communication there is, occurs far too randomly. For an assessment to produce useful results(without for the moment defining what 'useful' means) there must be enough control over the content for the necessary comparisons to be made. The control does not need to be in the form of a detailed specification, though it can be some kind of assessment, but should set the limits for what is acceptable in terms of both appropriateness and correctness for the purpose which is represented by the test.

The problem of how this control is to be achieved may be tackled by asking a defining question: 'How can we assess what is happening when language is used purposefully?'. The four important elements in this sentence are assess, happen, language and purpose.

Taking these in the reverse order - the logical one - the purpose of language use is communication, which means that there are at least two people involved. This is obviously true of a spoken exchange, but it is also true of communications through writing and reading. An entry in a polician's diary is not just a personal note of what colleagues said in Cabinet on a particular day, and this becomes obvious as soon as the diarist is out of office and the work is published as a justification of his past attitudes and actions. Language is written with a reader in mind, and is spoken for a listener. The reader or listener in turn responds to the meaning of the language he is offered. He reads for information or pleasure, listens in order to respond - and the results of this response may be very varied, ranging from a black eye arising from the reaction to an insult, to a note on a message pad as the outcome of a telephone call, as well as the more predictable development of a conversation as it progresses. It is not just a question of integrating the 'four skills' - of admitting the impossibility of separating reading from writing and listening from speaking - but a question of accepting that language is integrated with the circumstances in which it is used. The element of language in the defining question is therefore the language which is appropriate to these circumstances - where it is being used, by whom, with what aim in view and even with what success. What is happening is a sequence of language which arises from, and is modified by, the context in which it occurs.

An example of a sequence in this sense might be as follows: I am going to buy some bread. I do not need to read 'Baker & Confectioner' on the shop front because I know where our local bread shop is, but even if I didn't, I can see the bread in the window. I go in and say 'Hello' to a friend who happens to be in the shop, following this up with an enquiry about his wife's health, since I am surprised to find him buying bread instead of being at work. He explains that she is in bed with

flu: I commiserate. I reach the counter. 'Good morning', I say to the shop assistant, consulting my shopping list. 'Can I have a large Farmhouse and a small brown please?' "Sorry, no small browns left', she says. 'I'd better have a large one than', I reply, annotating the shopping list to explain the discrepancy to my wife later... And so the sequence continues. This scene is commonplace to the point of cliché, the kind of role play which will bear little or no repetition in class, but it contains a great deal of material for discussion.

The first point is that analysing the sequence from the point of view of one of the participants ('I'), separating out the communication skills involved, the semantic content and the result of interaction between these skills and content, shows that there is great variety even within this sort space. This is clear from Figure 1. Secondly, all four of the traditional language skills (Listen, Speak, Read, Write) are interwoven in the sequence. In addition, it appears that

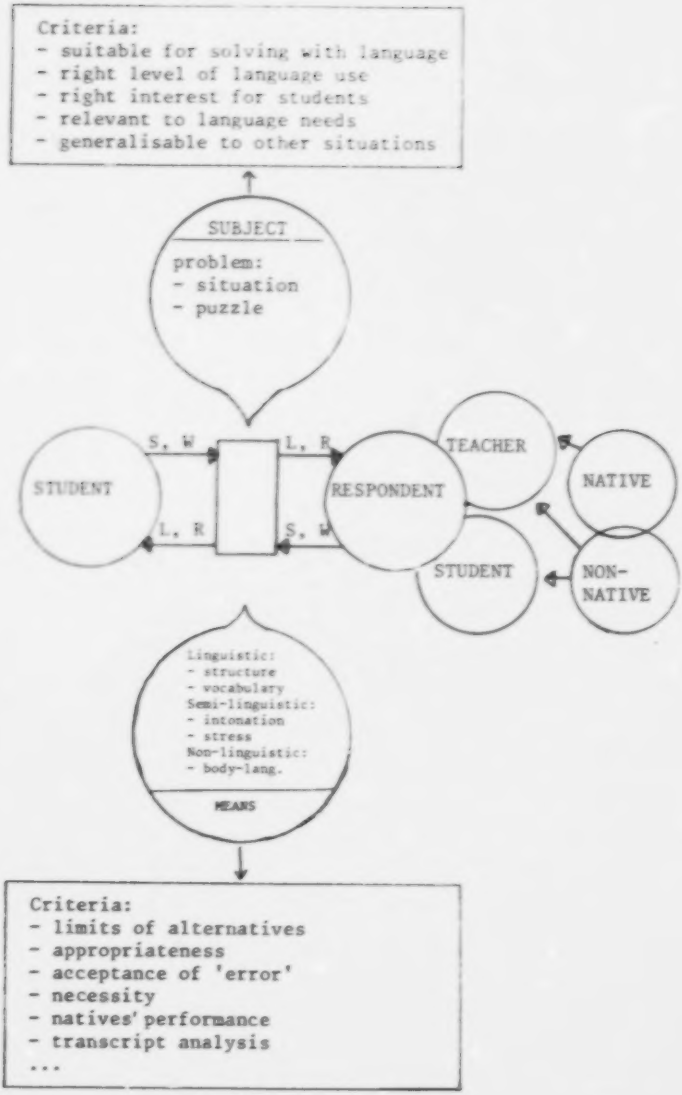
Figure 1 The bread shop sequence

skill needed by 'I'	content (semantic)	result (receptive)	intention (productive)
Read	Baker & Confectioner	(information)	
visual	bread in window	confirmation	
visual	friend	surprise,pleasure	
Speak	hello		greeting
Speak	how is wife?		enquiry
Listen	flu	information	
Speak	sorry		sympathy
visual	assistant	recognition	
Speak	good morning		greeting
Read	shopping list	reminder	
Speak	Farmhouse, small brown		request, purpose
Listen	sorry, no small		apology,information
visual	large one	information suggestion	
Speak	large one		request, purpose
Write	large		information

considerably more visual communication occurs in real life than is reflected in role plays and tests as they are commonly organised. I am surprised and pleased to see my friend, but would not start speaking to him unless I saw him; I see by general movement of people in the shop and by the fact that the assistant is looking at me that it is my turn to be served; my alternative request for a large loaf is triggered by seeing one on the shelf. Thirdly, the verbal exchanges involve three people, not just two, and the role relationship differs between each possible pair within the three. I greet my friend and the shop assistant in different ways, and it is clear (though not explicitly stated in the analysis in Figure 1) that my whole conversation with him is more informal than my transaction with her. (To clarify the relationship in the third pairing, I should add that my friend finds the bread shop girl quite attractive.) Fourthly, the transaction goes wrong at one stage (there are no small brown loaves), which means that a standard response is not enough to meet the situation. Communication involves coping with a sequence of events which does not necessarily follow the patterns of a drill practice: the student must be capable of applying the language he has learnt to a new situation by responding appropriately to it. Finally, the analysis of skills and results/intentions derived from the language used in the bread shop sequence are a more helpful guideline for setting up exchanges of this kind as role plays (either for teaching or for testing) than the language actually used on this particular occasion.

These five principles are helpful in considering how to assess communication. A sixth principle will sum up the discussion so far: what needs to be assessed is not just whether the language used by the candidate is right or wrong in itself, but whether it is appropriate, that is, right or wrong for the context.

Figure 2. A communicative test.



All these arguments are the same as those in favour of communicative (or functional/notional) language learning. How can they be applied to assessment? This is the first element in the defining question discussed earlier. The starting point is the information gap which is to be bridged by communication. This is the blank rectangle in the middle of Figure 2. This diagram relates particularly to the immediate, live exchange between speakers, but in principle the same approach can be applied to the time-lapsed communication which occurs with writing and reading. In general, what the diagram shows is that decisions have to be made about the subject of an exchange and the means of doing it, and also the criteria on which these decisions need to be made. The student is on one side of the information gap, the respondent on the other. (There is a difficulty in finding the right title for this other person because he may initiate rather than merely respond, and cannot be called an interlocutor if he does not actually speak, as when the student is instructing him in some action which he is to perform.) The respondent may be a teacher representing a native (or non-native) speaker in the real-life communication represented by the test; or he may be another student, who by definition can represent only a non-native speaker; or he may be one of a group who interact in turn with the student and each other. The student Speaks or Writes into the information gap and Listens and Reads out of it. The respondent matches these skills with the opposite ones: L and R for the student's S and W, and vice versa. Other skills which are not mentioned in the diagram but could be called into play are, on the productive side (with S and W), action and drawing - responses which are not linguistic but are evidence of understanding; and on the receptive side (with L and R), visual material - a prompt for production. In addition, the student's Reading may be of material which is not supplied by the respondent but is available as data (often in the form of realia) for the discussion across the gap.

Above the gap is the subject of the exchange - what the participants are talking about - and beneath, the means with which they do it - what they are communicating with. The subject for a test of communication

must set some kind of problem which creates an information gap and at the same time provides the incentive to bridge it. The problem is at its most realistic as a situation, which says in effect to the student: 'Suppose you were....' (in the bread shop/at a party/planning a holiday/furnishing your flat, and so on). But the possibilities for setting up realistic situations of this kind are limited, particularly at the earlier stages of language learning, so an additional strategy is proposed, labelled 'puzzle' in the diagram. This says to the student 'Here is a task... '(follow these instructions/solve this enigma/find out what is required/make sense of these elements, and so on). The puzzle is not realistic, in the sense that it is likely to coincide with the eventual purposes for which the student is learning the language, but it gives him a legitimate reason for using the language he has learnt for useful purposes such as discussion, agreement, or persuasion. It is, in short, functional.

What kinds of problem can be set for assessing communication? Five citeria are listed at the top of the diagram. First, it is obvious that the problem has to be one which requires the use of spoken or written language to solve it. A taxi can be hailed with no more than a wave of an umbrella; a game of bridge can be won by playing particular cards for the information of one's partner or, at worst, by aiming a kick under the table. Language as learnt in the classroom is superfluous in these circumstances. Secondly, the language level required must be suitable for the intended students. This is not merely a question of how much the candidate has learnt - whether he is a beginner or an advanced student - but what he will be required to do with the language which the test offers him and demands of him. It is possible, and if the real life situation is being represented, desirable, for him to be given authentic material to work with, but requiring less of him in response at the lower levels than at the higher levels, both in quantity and in quality of understanding. The third criterion, that the material used should be of the right interest for the students, again seems obvious, but as well as the subject matter (the words of a pop song as against a text on macro-economics) there are considerations of

the level of attack ('tourism' means something very different to an adult learner and a school pupil, though it is ostensibly the same topic) and the intrinsic interest of the problem which is set (is there some psychological pressure on the student to find the solution, or is the problem something he would not care to solve even in his native language?). The 'needs' argument is that if students are learning the language for a purpose, the language that they learn should be relevant for this purpose: in the same way, it is rather pointless to present a candidate with a role play about planning a holiday trip to the mountains if he is not going to visit the country where the language is spoken but is interested in reading technical literature. Finally the assessment must represent something which has wider application than the occasion of the test. It could be argued that a student who could cope with the bread shop sequence (in a more formalised, test version) could also cope with a similar transaction in a department store, even though the context is different, provided he knew the necessary vocabulary. It could hardly be maintained, however, that success in that sequence would forecast adequate performance at a company board meeting where a take-over deal is to be discussed, even though the transaction is essentially the same, a buying and selling procedure. This is perhaps an absurd example, but the generalisability of assessments is too easily taken for granted: it is in practice one of the more problematical aspects of validity and sampling.

The means for fulfilling the demands made by a test are both linguistic and nonlinguistic, and need no further elaboration at this point. The balloon in the diagram signals merely the fact of their existence. The selection of means for any particular assessment is guided by the criteria listed in the box under the 'means' balloon. The first criterion is how to set limits to the infinite possibilities for language performance. As suggested earlier, it is not feasible for the assessor to say simply: 'Speak and I will judge', because then it is impossible for him to make any but fortuitous comparisons between one performance and the next. And comparison is the essence of assessment. Different comparisons are required for different purposes: the student may want

to compare his present performance with that of a few weeks ago, or with the performance of other students in the same class, or more generally with students at the same level on a national basis; or to compare his language capability with the tasks it has been called upon to perform. Another crucial comparison is between the judgements of different assessors, either those made by different assessors on the same occasion or those made at different times by the same assessor. The only way in which these aspects of reliability can be tackled is to set some limitations to the language which is permissible in the test. One of the traditional methods of providing this control is to make the student show understanding of meaning in one language by expressing it in another: that is, translation. Another is to offer him a closed set of responses, as in a multiple-choice test. In a communicative test, the control is provided by the context.

It has already been suggested that one of the most important aspects of the language used in an exchange is its appropriateness for the occasion on which it is used. It is here that the problem of judging the effectiveness of a communication has to be faced. Appropriateness does not necessarily entail correct grammatical form, but it is concerned with whether the language used fits the roles of the speaker and his hearer (stranger/stranger, friend/friend), whether it is consistent within the established linguistic context of the exchange (a question of collocation, the right words in the right places and in the right order) and also whether it is suitable for the physical context. These conditions are the basis for deciding on the limits of the alternatives to be allowed - the essential ground rules for a marking scheme.

Another difficult question then has to be answered: how far can error be tolerated? The answer for a communicative test should be: until it stops communication. The point at which this happens depends on the other party to the exchange. For example, if a writing test consists of a letter written by the candidate in answer to an advertisment about accommodation, the marking scheme should presumably be based on the likely reaction of the recipient. If he is in business to promote the letting of hotel rooms and other accommodation to foreign tou-

rists, he is not concerned about whether 'Dear Sir' is followed by 'Yours faithfully' or 'Yours sincerely' though the former is the convention required by the rules of business correspondence. Still less is he interested in the spelling of 'sincerely'. He may have enough experience in the business to know what a German speaker means by 'I only need one room and a badroom'. But if dates are omitted or expressed ambiguously he will have to write back and ask for further information. At this point it is clear that communication has broken down. With this kind of blunt judgement, discrimination between student's performances is impossible to achieve except at the lowest levels. The student who walks into the hi-fi shop, points at the cassettes he wants and says 'Two' has communicated perfectly well for his purposes. He has not made any grammatical error and his vocabulary, as far as it goes, is perfect. There are arguments for rejecting the concept of 'error' in language learning altogether in favour of 'idiosyncratic dialects' since there is no evidence that the learner is failing to follow a known rule, only that the rules he has learnt so far do not apply in the sentence he is constructing ('Every sentence is to be regarded as idiosyncratic until shown to be otherwise', Corder 1974: 166). This is another route to appropriateness, since the judgement which a communicative assessment has to make about the quality of the student's performance relates not just to the formulation of acceptable sentences but also to the transmission of an appropriate response. It should be possible therefore to draw up a marking scheme which sets up categories of acceptance/rejection in terms of communication and appropriateness , with the latter including functional and social criteria which may well override grammatical and semantic 'correctness' as they are usually conceived of in language tests.

It has been suggested above that controls have to be set for the language which is to be produced by the student. This implies a limitation of the amount of material to be assessed. Conversely, however, it also implies a mimimum which is to be produced. The criterion of communication on its own could lead to the acceptance of anything at all which seemed even basically communicative (for example 'Me, beer') in any

Germanic-language-speaking community), but this kind of exchange falls short of the limits which have to be set to allow the necessary comparisons to be made. The limits cannot be the perfect performance expected by a grammar/translation or structuralist approach, but must relate to the linguistic/communicative task in hand. A possible way forward is to look for the essentials in an act of communication and set those up as the basis for the marking. If the marking scheme can guide the assessor to make judgements on those elements which are necessary for the communication to take place, the language without which the exchange cannot reach a conclusion, everything else which happens can be left out of the assessment. This is an essential condition for a positive marking scheme. For example, in the bread shop sequence, it is communicatively successful and structurally correct, but socially inappropriate, for me to greet my friend with 'Where's your wife?' Although it is a well-formed enquiry from the purely linguistic point of view it is not an expression of friendly greeting, and in addition it would be interpreted as an insult because I know my friend's wife's name perfectly well but choose not to use it. For an assessment which was concerned with basic strategies for making contact with others there could be a marking scheme which laid down rules for communication first and appropriateness second. A student who produced a sentence like this in the context given would be credited with achieving communication but not appropriateness. But if an essential component of the assessment in the bread shop sequence were the function 'greeting', the student could be given no credit for this utterance as communication, and appropriateness would not be considered.

In setting up assessments on the basis of the essentials needed to communicate, the immediate problem is how to establish what these essentials are. The answer, almost inevitably, is the performance of native speakers. But proposing the native speaker as the ideal performer is too restrictive for this purpose, except perhaps for assessments at the highest levels: all that is needed are competent performances by fluent speakers - no more in fact than what is required of a teacher. If the task set in the test, whether it is a situation or a puzzle, is

solved on a trial basis by a number of fluent speakers, it should be possible to analyse what they say and decide on some essentials which can form the basis for assessment.

The analysis of performances presents further complications. Firstly since every fluent performance will be different, how many are needed before the essentials can be established? And secondly, what sort of analysis is required? The first of these questions has to be answered empirically, because the amount of variation in the performances which solve a communication problem depend on the nature of the problem itself. The range of possible conversational gambits which could fulfil the function 'getting to know someone at a social gathering' is very wide indeed, but necessarily includes greeting, giving and receiving information, stating likes and dislikes and so on. Describing how to perform some physical operation will probably require only instruction, confirmation and correction. In the first case, a larger number of fluent performances will be needed to establish what is necessary language content than in the second. The analysis of these performances does not need to be as thorough as the systems proposed for the analysis of discourse (Coulthard 1977), but it does need some theoretical basis so that a series of consistent decisions can be made about the requirements of a marking system.

The intention of the analysis is limited, not exhaustive: it is to find out which factors are to be assessed, as these have been established in the trial exchanges. The use of transcripts is helpful because the act of listening with understanding is normally a search for meaning, not for form or function, and it is only when the actual words used are available on a longer term basis than speech that an adequate analysis can be carried out. The result looked for depends on the purpose of the assessment, and this takes the discussion right back to the beginning, where the specification for the test asks and then tries to answer questions about purposes, as the basis for decisions about content.

In the present discussion the assumption has been that the purpose of a

communicative test is largely to assess proficiency - the ability to apply the language that has been learnt to situations which are subsequently met. The content should presumably therefore be expressed in functions. But the analysis could equally well look for what makes a function work in a given situation - the 'enabling skills' described by Morrow (1979). These are the contents of the 'means' balloon in Figure 2. Alternatively the analysis could be concerned with some combination of functions, structures and vocabulary. This raises several issues which cannot be dicussed in detail here, but may be briefly signalled. First, a function can often be fulfilled by so many different structures that it may be difficult if not impossible to lay down any 'necessary structures'. Second, the vocabulary used in a particular exchange may well not be generalisable, since the analysis is looking for applied lexis rather than the more traditional basis of assessment such as 'width' of vocabulary, which implies knowledge of rarer words and facility with reformulations. Third, the process of isolating the necessary means in a transcript (or a series of them) may seem like a return to the discrete-point approach, which is inappropriate for communicative tests because individual items without context do not add up to valid assessment of language for useful purpose. But in this case it is the context which makes the point acceptable or not. In any case, it will be possible to accept alternatives (which is not allowed with the traditional type of discrete-point test) since variations are possible within a given situation.

The above discussion has centred on the elements in a live exchange, since it is here that the greatest difficulty exists in trying to identify essentials. The same principles however apply to the time-lapsed exchange through the written word. The important point is that the relationship between the parties to an exchange is what governs the content of that exchange. The next stage is to attempt to put these suggestions into practice.

The principle of establishing the content of an exchange by noting what happens when fluent speakers perform it has been tries out experimentally with small grous of participants (The use of 'perform' is deli-

berate, since the experimental situation is even more unreal than an actual test.). The performance itself need not take long, since the length of an exchange depends on the nature of the task to be done, and some kinds of task may be completed in a few minutes. The aim of the exercise is to see how far the 'necessary' language can be extracted from repeated performances. Two members of the group play the parts in the exchange, as explained to them on individual cards (not seen by anyone else in the group), and the others act as observers, each one looking for a particular aspect of the exchange and noting it as it occurs, for discussion later. For example, one listens for those structures used by the two role players which seem essential for communication to take place; another listens for essential vocabulary; another notes functions expressed; another watches for body language used; and so on, depending on the number of participants. The amount of material in each of these categories and its importance relative to the others varies according to the demands of different tasks.

An example of a role play used for this exercise is a mock telephone conversation called 'An evening out?'. The task is based on an instruction card and two role cards, as reproduced in Figure 3. The intention is to provoke an exchange in which the players have different preferences and different aims in view, but are each open to persuasion by the other. The question mark in the title indicates that the players are not expected to come to any preconceived conclusion: indeed, they might in the end agree not to go out together this Saturday. The discussion itself is more important than the result arrived at. This may at first sight seem oddly at variance with the principles of setting a task to be achieved with language, and with the criterion-referenced assessment which logically follows: neither the task nor the assessment can be set up without specifying in advance what successful performance consists of. But the purpose of 'An evening out?' as a test would be to give the students a chance to show whether they can discuss , persuade, argue, put a point of view, and so on, in the context of a personal, friend/friend exchange. The vocabulary they use (which is largely given in the role cards) is less important in this instance

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Figure 3. An exchange.

4. An evening out?

Take one card each. Sit back to back and use the information on the cards as the basis for a telephone conversation

An evening out?

No 1

You are Chris.

It is Friday evening and you have been looking at the adverts for local cinemas (see over) You telephone your friend Pat to ask him/her to go to see a film with you tomorrow evening.

You have had a busy week at work and want to relax and cheer yourself up. You have heard that "Elephant Man" is good, but you don't know much about it. You have already seen "Close Encounters"

What are you going to do on Saturday evening?

An evening out?

No 2

You are Pat.

Your telephone number is 997 4455.

It is Friday evening and you aren't doing anything on Saturday evening, but there is a quite good play on TV.

You think "Elephant Man" is a depressing film: it's about an ugly man and his unhappy life. You would like to see "Close Encounters" because you enjoyed it before and someone has told you that the new version is even better.

As a non-smoker, you hate the smell of cigarettes, and you know that the ABC cinema does not have a non-smoking section.

What are you going to do on Saturday evening?

than the functions which the players need to express and the structures which they find from their own language resources to achieve this expression.

For example, the beginning of the exchange is bound to include establishing the identities of the speakers, an explanation of why the telephone call is being made, information from the newspaper cutting, an offer or suggestion from No 1, and so on. The structures will include question forms, various tenses ('I've been looking at the paper'; 'Would you like to go?'; 'I've seen it'), negatives, comparatives and so on. The content of the exchange can be listed in the same way as the bread shop sequence (Figure 1), and this can be used as the basis for a marking scheme. In this way, the assessment is made positively, since priority is given to communications achieved rather than to the exact use of particular forms. The mark scheme might, for example, specify as one of the points for assessment the expression of past reference, and the student could achieve credit for this whether he said 'I've seen it' or 'I saw it last week , or avoided the past form of the verb altogether by saying 'I went to see it last week'. This avoidance strategy raises an important principle: the assessor should give it credit as expressing the required concept (or notion), not penalise it as an evasion. If the marking is done on the basis of credit for 'communication', plus credit for 'correctness' when communication has been achieved, these three examples would all be awared both. Grammatical errors would result in the loss (or rather non-award) of the 'correctness' credit. The performance of each student thus builds up into a series of achievements, which are interlocked in a sequence but are not necessarily dependent on each other, since the progress of the exchange is supported by both participants - it is in their interests that it should continue.

This kind of assessment system has considerable flexibility. It can be applied to different contents by adjusting the extent of the individual points which are to be assessed, from particular required structures to complete gambits such as an instruction or explanation. It can be

used for different purposes of testing, most obviously for proficiency tests, in which what has been learnt is applied to new situations, but also for diagnostic tests, which show whether the student has learnt what he has just been taught. It also has possibilities for self-assessment by providing for comparisons to be made with the student's previous efforts.

The approach to assessment through setting up communicative exchanges is not new in itself, nor does it offer possible solutions for assessment problems in general. The variety of situations in which assessments have to be made is so wide that a range of techniques is needed to cope with them. But where the interest lies in how well the student has learnt to apply language to communicative purposes at whatever level of sophistication he has reached, the procedures suggested above can give helpful guidelines in specifying and setting up the test situations. Perhaps most important of all, the student needs this kind of positive feedback about his progress to show him that the elements of language which he is learning are building up into a practical repertoire of communicative skills.

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Editors' note:

1. Readers might find it helpful to refer also to Schlissinger, J. & Carroll, M., (1980) Testing Communicative Competence, Oxford, Pergamon.

2. Andrew Harrison's above article was very much written with the EFL/ESL Secondary schoolclass in mind. In adult EFL/ESL teaching, but, to a certain extent, this also holds good for the school situation, it would be advisable in student-centred testing to make a distinction between external and internal assessment. In any communicative approach, the emphasis is placed, by definition, on the expression of the learners' intentions, needs and attitudes: subjective criteria for evaluation are therefore an essential part of learning and performing. If the reader is interested in this aspect of self-assessment in communicative foreign language testing, we refer him to:

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THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH
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Philip Riley

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The discontent with the structuralist and Chomskyan view of linguistic study which found its most powerful expression in Dell Hymes' 'On Communicative Competence' has given rise to an ever-increasing deluge of publications on what has become to be called 'the communicative approach to language teaching'. Is it likely that the practising teacher will acquaint himself with the jungle of publications in Pragmatics, Speech Act Theory, Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics and Language Didactics and create for himself a coherent picture? Even in the field of Language Didactics quite a few publications are rather inaccessible because they are jargon-ridden in their dependence on theory and research in the other fields. The present collection of eleven papers, without claiming to be representative of all these fields, hopes to offer teacher trainers and teachers alike, a coherent, readible and useable introduction to communicative language teaching. It is also hoped that this collection forms a positive contribution to the ongoing communicative debate.

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